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• JOURNAL •

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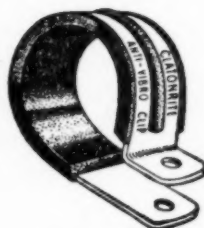
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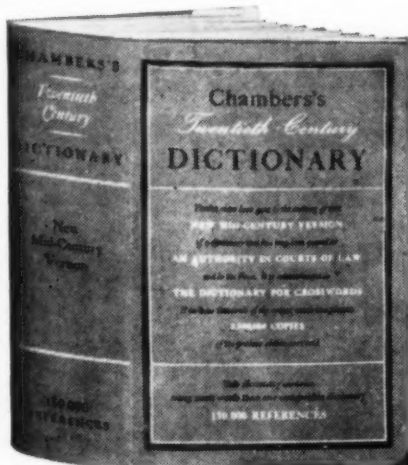
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# *When Johnny Robins Flew*

MILES TRIPP

JOHNNY ROBINS could hear them muttering together. He edged closer to the five men who stood by the Wellington's fuselage, cumbrously dressed in flying-kit. Five men—and there should have been six. As Johnny Robins moved nearer, unobserved in the dusk, he overheard an urgent conversation. 'Why the hell couldn't he have been back in time? What kinda outfit does he think this is? A hunky chicken-farm?'

'He'll show up,' drawled a tall Vancouver.

'Yeah? And take-off in twenty minutes? He'll show up. He better! Here we are, our first real trip to Europe, and what gives?'

No one answered. Johnny Robins was close enough to hear the Canadians distinctly. The pilot, Lou Misty, continued: 'I'll tell you what gives. We ain't got a tail-gunner. What d'you know—Misty's crew go into action without a tail-gunner. And why? Because some crazy loon has gotten himself a heavy date.'

'We could report him and take a spare gunner,' suggested someone nervously.

'Report! Misty's crew rat on one of their own? Not goddam likely. We fly short.'

'And what about interrogation? How do we explain there are only five of us when we come back?'

'We can't get away with it,' added another crew member.

Lou Misty faced his four compatriots. 'Listen. While I'm here, I'm boss. If I say we fly one man short, we fly one man short. If I say you all stay here, you all stay here and I'll go on my own!'

'He'll show up,' drawled the tall one.

'For God's sake don't keep saying "He'll show up." You know goddam well he won't,' snarled Misty.

'I reckon we should report it, Lou. Maybe we can get fixed up with a spare gunner.'

'Pin back those loving-cup ears and listen.' Misty infused a cold savagery into his undertone. 'We went to briefing one fella short. We agreed nobody would say anything about Cliff not being there. He wasn't missed. Good. So we get on the crew-wagon and

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come out here. He's still not missed. Good. We fly to Paris, drop the leaflets, and scam. Good. We get back and go for interrogation—and here's where we're smart. If Cliff's back on camp, he goes in with us, just as if he's been with us all the time. All he has to do is play dumb and let us do the talking. If he's not back, we'll say his guts are troubling him real bad and he's gone right off to Sick Quarters for treatment. They'll never check.'

'And what if he gets back here while we're airborne and reports himself as AWOL—we'll all be in it then.'

'Brother,' said Misty, 'I carry all the cans round here. Just pass the buck to me.'

'Excuse me, sir.' Johnny Robins spoke deferentially, for he was an Aircraftman (Second Class), whereas Misty was a Flying-Officer.

The Canadians were startled to find that someone had been so close; in the heavy shadows of dusk, Johnny Robins sensed, rather than saw, their animosity.

'What d'you want, fella?' asked Misty in a guarded voice.

'I want to fly with you, sir. I could take your gunner's place.'

'Like hell! And what d'you mean by listening to things that don't concern you? I've a good mind to put you on a charge.'

'Then you would have to put all Q-Queenie's ground-crew on a charge,' said Johnny Robins bravely, 'because we all know you're a man light.'

'Well, what d'you know!' breathed Misty. 'Here's junior wanting to dice with the big boys. How old are you, kid?'

'Eighteen,' said Johnny Robins.

'And can you use .303 Brownings?'

'I was brought up on them, sir, and I've done a two-week course on them.'

'How come you didn't join up for aircrew, kid?'

'I did, but they said my ears were bad. But that's daft—I can hear all right.'

'No parachute, no Mae West, no kit. You'd be frozen to death. Besides, what would your Mom say if you went missing?'

'You won't go missing, sir. This is only a leaflet raid and doesn't count as more than half an op.'

Misty was nettled at this. 'Don't you believe it, kid. We're really dicing.'

'Our chiefy has got an Irvine jacket and a helmet, sir, that he uses for air tests. I could borrow them . . . Here he is now.'

The ground-crew flight-sergeant came up breathlessly on his bicycle. 'Sorry I'm late,' he said. 'We've been having trouble with R-Roger. Get you started in a minute. When's take-off?'

'In fifteen minutes,' replied the tall Vancouver, who was the crew's mid-upper gunner.

Without a tremor in his voice Johnny Robins addressed the ground-crew flight-sergeant: 'Chiefy, will you lend me your Irvine and your flying-helmet. These blokes are a man short and they're willing to take me along if it's okay with you.'

'Here now,' said the flight-sergeant, 'if you want to risk your neck, that's your funeral, but I don't want to know about it.'

'But your jacket and the . . .'

'If you took them while I wasn't there, I'd be none the wiser.'

'Thanks, chiefy.' Johnny Robins raced over to the ground-crew hut.

'What d'you know?' marvelled Misty. 'Blokes!' That kid's got nerve all right. I reckon he'll do.'

AS Q-Queenie gathered speed along the runway, the tail rose from the ground. On either side Johnny Robins saw a blur of runway flares. When the Wellington cleared the outer boundary of the airfield, he could see the flares as individual lights, a parallel row of Christmas-tree candles. He was too excited to notice the cold.

Q-Queenie climbed into the night and Johnny Robins thought of his next leave and how he would nonchalantly tell his mother of this epic flight, how his father (a 1914-18 Military Medal holder) would listen in respectful silence, and how his sister would interject 'Oo, Johnny' and 'My goodness gracious!' He stuck out his jaw like John Garfield—he was John Garfield. It was a pity that he couldn't boast around the camp of his experience—it might land Cliff whoever-it-was in trouble. But if only he could have just one bit of swank. The taut jaw sagged and he sighed. Then he remembered where he was and what he was doing and the jaw became more rigid and aggressive than ever.

'How's it going, kid?'

Johnny Robins fumbled for his microphone switch.

'Hey, there. I said how's it going, kid?'

'Fine, thanks, skipper.'



## WHEN JOHNNY ROBINS FLEW

'Warm enough?'

'Yes, thanks.'

'Say, er, did you bring a parachute with you?'

'No, sir.'

'No. I didn't think you had. I was checking. No need to worry.'

'I'm not worried,' said Johnny Robins.

'Roger.' The pilot switched off his microphone, but his voice came through again a moment later: 'Hey, kid, switch off your mike, eh. Your breathing sounds like that old runaway train we've so often heard tell of.'

'Sorry, skipper.' Johnny Robins blushed behind his rubber mask.

Q-Queenie flew south to Beachy Head and Johnny Robins rotated his turret and looked around the sky. The moon was a quarter of lemon lying on the edge of a black fruit-dish, the stars were sugar grains. Below, the cloud-tops were frothy suds in a bowl of dirty water. Johnny Robins was not a poet, but the night skyline moved in him a certain alien emotion which inspired metaphors from after-meal washing-up.

He felt very isolated in his turret and could hardly hear the engines. A sense of unreality pervaded him and he pinched himself. He thought of Jean, his girl-friend. They had kissed, for the first time, on Johnny's recent leave. 'Gosh, that kiss made me feel quite funny,' he told her. She had laughed. 'Of course it did, silly. You know what it means, don't you?' 'No,' said Johnny. 'Well, if a boy and a girl feel like that when they kiss, they're in love . . . You love me, Johnny, don't you?' 'Oh, Jean, I do, I do.'

The crew were talking among themselves over the intercom.

'We've crossed the English coast,' said the navigator. 'It's good-bye England; Paris, here we come!'

'Has anyone got an address,' asked the Vancouver mid-upper gunner.

'A Paris address? No. Why, have you?'

'Sure have. Went to Paris before the war.'

'But you were a kid then, you wouldn't have any addresses.'

'That's what you think, butch.'

Silence. Q-Queenie was climbing. The freezing air which had been seeping into Johnny Robins's turret had chilled his hands and feet. He rubbed his ungloved hands and stamped his feet to maintain circulation. He thought of Greener.

Greener was a school friend, a best-friend enemy. He and Johnny had always been rivals and chums. Johnny had captained the football team, but Greener had led the cricket eleven. They had both obtained scholarships to a secondary school. Greener usually came top of the form, but Johnny had greater athletic successes. They had volunteered for the R.A.F. together; Johnny had failed the stringent aircrew medical, but Greener was at present training to be a pilot. On leave, Johnny had been envious of the white flash in Greener's forage-cap and he hadn't liked the boasts about 'spins in Tigers.' I'm beating him to ops, thought Johnny Robins, I'll make him look pretty sick when I tell him what it was like over Paris.

'We're at 10,000 feet,' said Misty, 'and I'm turning on the oxygen.'

Oxygen. Johnny Robins fumbled for the turret connection, found it, then realised that he couldn't plug in. A wave of panic swept over his body like the prickling of a thousand hot pins. There was no rubber nozzle from his mask that could be connected. The ground-crew flight-sergeant never required oxygen for test flights, and so his helmet had not needed the addition of that precious rubber-tube, an essential of prolonged altitude flying.

'Is everybody receiving oxygen okay?' asked Misty.

There was a chorus of 'Yeahs.'

'You there, in the tail; how's it with you, kid?'

'I'm all right,' said Johnny, and as he spoke he knew that he had made an immense decision.

**B**ACK at base, in the hut near Q-Queenie's dispersal, a Canadian air-gunner was lamenting that he had missed the operation. 'Trust Cliff Kopak to do the wrong thing. Trust me. Did you say that nobody but you, and the guy that took my place, knows about this?'

'That's right. The rest of my lot were over at Roger's dispersal. I'd left Johnny Robins here as a stand-by till I got back.'

'And you think he'll keep his mouth shut?'

'Johnny will—he's a good little chap. All you have to do is wait here, and when they get back you go with them to interrogation.'

'Guess I owe this Robins fella a vote of thanks.'

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The flight-sergeant grinned. 'I think he owes one to you. This is the sort of chance he's dreamed about. What happened to you, anyway. Why were you late?'

Cliff Kopak sat down by a table in the hut and lit a Sweet Caporal. He then offered one to the flight-sergeant and, on impulse, added: 'Aw, keep the packet—we get plenty.' A low-wattage electric-bulb hung from the ceiling and in its unmasked light both men looked tired.

'I've got a girl in Leighton Buzzard,' said Kopak. 'We see each other most every evening when there's no flying on. Met her at the Corn Exchange dance there—cute, with big brown eyes. Her real name is Cecily, but I can't call her that. I call her Candy. We have plenty fun.' Kopak waved his hands and exhaled a jet of cigarette-smoke. 'I knew there was night-flying to-night, but I reckoned I could get back in time on my bike. I didn't reckon on it being a raid. I started back at eight, but hadn't got more than half-a-mile when both goddam tyres went flat—maybe Candy's kid brother was responsible for that. If I'd known it was an op, I'd have ridden back on the rims, but I thought it was another routine night-exercise; I've missed one or two of those as it is; Lou Misty, my skipper, he doesn't mind. But an op! Oh, my shattered nerves! What time d'you reckon they'll be back?'

'Somewhere about two in the morning, I should think.'

'Hope to hell nothing goes wrong. I'd have an awful lot of explaining to do.'

'Nothing will,' said the flight-sergeant. 'We've flown a good many leaflet raids from here and only lost two the whole time, and they were both on the same night.'

'What was the target?'

'Nantes.'

'What's the target to-night?'

'Don't know,' replied the flight-sergeant. 'It's not my business to know, and I never make a point of asking.' There was a pause. 'I did ask once,' he said, in an altered tone. 'That was the night they went to Nantes.'

Kopak laughed. 'Don't say you're superstitious, chiefy.'

'You never know,' replied the flight-sergeant doggedly. 'Funny coincidence that the one night I ask a crew where they're going, they don't come back.'

'So now you don't ask them, and they always come back. Hiya, God.'

'They should be getting near the target now,' said the flight-sergeant.

'We hope.'

'What would happen if the C.O. found out about this? You wouldn't lose your commission?'

'A court-martial, maybe, depending on his mood. Naturally, I wouldn't mention Candy.'

'Going to marry her?'

'Hell, no. I got a girl back home. You married, chiefy?'

'Yes. Eighteen years, and never regretted a minute. We've got the secret of the perfect marriage.'

'Tell.'

'Well, I'm regular R.A.F. Things are a bit cockeyed in wartime, but in peace I used to see her for a week every three months. Just right. We've never had a chance to get tired of each other. I've not got used to her, and she's the same about me. It's like having four regular honeymoons a year. That's why I never put in for married quarters.'

'Sounds great. Sure, sounds great,' mused Cliff Kopak.

'It's the only way,' said the flight-sergeant with conviction. 'Course, it doesn't work out so well for the kiddies. They don't see a lot of their old man, but I think it's up to Em and me to preserve that honeymoon feeling at all costs. After all, when I get my pension, I have to live with her, and the nippers will be married off. If it was her or them, I'd choose her.'

'Terrific,' said Kopak.

'You may think me soft'—and the flight-sergeant looked anything but soft—'but the wife is every bit as beautiful to me as on the day I married her. And she's forty-five now. How's that?'

'Sure is the right way, as you say.'

'If I had the chance to be a dictator,' said the flight-sergeant, 'I'd make it a law that every married couple should be separated for at least three months in every year.'

'You would, huh?'

'I certainly would. Believe me, divorces would cease to exist.'

Kopak straightened in his seat and stretched out his arms, then yawned. There was a long silence. At length he said: 'Pardon me, chiefy, but may I ask you a question?'

'Fire away,' said the flight-sergeant amicably.

'I've been thinking—how does a man make out when he doesn't see his wife more than

## WHEN JOHNNY ROBINS FLEW

once in three months? I mean, if it was me, I'd be raring to go.'

The flight-sergeant laughed benevolently. 'Well, of course, I usually line up a local popsy.'

'Oh, I get it. And your wife—she does the same?'

The flight-sergeant crashed his fist on the table between them: 'If I caught Em with another man, I'd kill 'em both.'

'PILOT from rear-gunner,' called Johnny Robins, 'I'm leaving my turret for a moment. I want a slash.'

'Okay, kid, you know where to find it?'

'I should do. I've had to empty them often enough!'

Johnny Robins struggled backwards through the doors, barked his shins on ammunition tanks, and groped his way to the metal closet. The effort required an unexpected amount of energy. When he returned to the turret he was panting heavily. As his breathing became more normal, he was conscious of the acute cold. Despite the Irvine jacket, he could feel his vest shift chilly on his body when he moved; his feet and hands were numb. He reached forward to switch on the graticule-sight, so that a dull-orange ring glowed between the top two guns. Then he placed the safety-catch mechanism of all four guns to 'Fire.' Thus prepared against emergency, he stuffed his hands into his trouser-pockets. Before long he was shivering uncontrollably. The cold air bit into his exposed skin, his bones felt like frozen sticks supported by unmoving blood.

His eyelids hung heavy and he had difficulty in keeping open-eyed, yet he was not tired or sleepy. He sat very still. The slightest movement sent a draught, chilly like a gust of powdered snow, up his trouser-legs. His knee-joints were aching and he was unable to bend his toes. He began thinking of Jean, home, and Greener, but they were confused thoughts, rather like the freewheeling dreams that chase through the mind as consciousness ebbs. Jean was standing on a fairground grill through which a wind rushed. Her skirt was around her waist, and Greener exclaimed: 'Look at the lace on them!' And now Dad was cross with him for a lie that wasn't a lie, but it wasn't quite the truth, for not saying why he was late home. Or was it another time when Dad was out of work and everyone

had cried. Kitty because Ma was crying, Ma because Dad (yes Dad) was crying. Dad was crying from rage at having to sell his medal to a man who collected them and who had been a conchie. And Johnny had cried from fright because he'd scribbled on the walls of his bedroom and it hadn't been discovered yet.

He had been beaten. His bones were aching and he was lying in a cold bath. He must have been asleep. Someone was hammering on the bathroom door. No, it was his heart throbbing in his eardrums. His heart was hurting his eardrums.

'There she is,' shouted Misty as the first searchlight pierced its silver needle into the cushion of night.

'I reckon they've been waiting for us,' called the bomb-aimer. 'Look at that god-dam flak.'

He was sliding down a glacier dressed only in mother's old grey bloomers.

From below some bright lights came slowly up, then curled round Q-Queenie's tail like a red whiplash. 'For God's sake, fire.' It was the tall Vancouvan. His drawl had gone. 'My guns are jammed,' he bawled. 'Hey, you there in the tail, what's up?—Weave, Misty!'

Back in the fairground. On the scenic railway now. Up and down, up and down. Greener wasn't there any more—it was just Jean and Johnny. And there was the jangling discord of music braying from every booth, and thousands of coloured lights and flashes racing past. 'This is lovely,' she said, as they switchbacked up and down, up and down, with the reds and yellows sparking beside them. Then suddenly she screamed. The music was louder, it dilated and contracted and folded in upon itself until it was a sustained roar on a single dissonance. It faded, to become Q-Queenie's engines. An enemy fighter was closing in from below.

Johnny Robins pulled his hands from his pockets and clumsily grabbed the trigger-rests. The cold iron seared across his palms like a livid poker. Red lights began curving up and round Q-Queenie again. Then Johnny fired and made his own music and fairground display. He swished the guns about like a hosepipe and sprayed tracer all over the sky.

A bonfire rushed above him. Of course, it was Guy Fawkes Day, not the fair. The fire-cracker sparklers, the bangs, the rockets, and the splashing lights. A huge Catherine-wheel fell off the fence top and squirted fire

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as it spun down. Jean was with him again, her lips moving, but her voice silent. 'There's too much noise, I can't hear what you're saying,' Johnny told her.

His heart boomed like the thumping of a big bass-drum.

FOR a long time Johnny Robins was the only man aboard Q-Queenie unaware that it was he who had shot down an enemy fighter. He had seen the glowing bonfire race over him and three seconds later had lost consciousness, the intense cold and lack of oxygen having finally overcome him. When oblivion came, his numb fingers slowly relaxed on the four triggers and the guns ceased their wild spraying of bullets.

Misty's crew shouted congratulations at him as their aircraft left Paris. After receiving no reply, Misty sent the mid-upper gunner along to investigate. With the help of the wireless operator he dragged Johnny Robins's body down the fuselage and instructed Misty to lose height. 'The poor kid was flying without oxygen!'

Johnny Robins was covered with what bits and pieces the crew could find—linen maps, Mae Wests, a canvas bag, and half a blanket—but he did not recover consciousness until they were back over the English Channel. His head ached intolerably and his fingers seemed on fire. It was as much as he could do to stop himself screaming with pain.

'He's in a bad way, he can't seem to talk, Lou,' said the mid-upper gunner to the pilot.

'How bad?'

'What do you mean, "How bad"?'

'Bad enough to call up the blood-wagon when we hit base?'

The mid-upper thought for a moment. 'I don't know . . . Maybe not that bad.'

'Good,' said Misty, 'because if Cliff's around when we get home, he's going to tell the interrogation officer how he shot down a Jerry.'

'You mean we're keeping quiet about the kid?'

'Sure thing. He came along for better or worse. Too bad that somebody else is going to borrow his glory, but that's the way it is.'

'What a laugh! I'll bet that's the first Jerry ever to be shot down over Paris by a gunner in England!'

'And it'll be the last,' said Misty grimly. 'When I get my hands on that dame-happy

bohunk, I'm going to teach him a lesson about crew discipline. This is his last chance, but definitely.'

Johnny Robins moved his head slightly and groaned. The agony in his head was a screw methodically turning by a screwdriver inserted in his left ear. He fainted away.

THEY were circling base. 'For the last time,' snarled Misty, 'I'm boss round here. If I say we play our hand the way it was dealt, we play it that way.'

'But the kid ought to see the M.O.,' said the mid-upper gunner.

'Okay. So he ought. When we land, the ground chiefy can take him along to Sick Quarters and they can fix him up.'

'But how'll he explain the way the kid is?'

'He doesn't have to. He can say the kid felt sick for a long time and he thinks it's pneumonia or something.'

'But I tell you his fingers are frostbitten to hell—red and purple and all blown up.'

'So what? Maybe he hitched a ride in one of the kites to-night. We don't know. No one does.'

'That ain't fair,' argued the mid-upper gunner, 'after him shooting down a kite.'

'Shut up,' said Misty, 'I'm calling Control . . . Clocktower from Redtape Queenie, over.'

'Prepare to land, Queenie.'

'Roger from Queenie, out.'

'They may put him on a charge for being a stowaway or something,' persisted the mid-upper gunner.

'That's his funeral,' replied Misty, 'we didn't ask him to come along.'

'But if he hadn't—'

'Quit bitching, will you. It's either him or Cliff, and if I say it's him, it's him.'

'Yeah, but—'

'I've got no room for sentiment. A skipper's got to be loyal to his crewmen before anything else. I'm sorry for the kid, sure, but this is war. If a man makes up his mind to do something, he's got to do it, no matter who it hurts. If he doesn't, he's weak and he's got no place here. I made up my mind and that's the way it stays. And I don't want to hear any more about it from any of you. That's an order . . . Give me one-third flap, Freddie.'

'One-third flap, Lou.'

As Q-Queenie sank lower and lower, Johnny Robins began to cry very softly. The medical



## WHEN JOHNNY ROBINS FLEW

board were right, he thought; there was something wrong with my ears. He wanted to clench his fists to keep out the pain in his head, but the fingers wouldn't respond to the brain's signals. He had found that if he said 'Jean' over and over again it helped.

He was still saying 'Jean' when he was carried into hospital.

IT was some weeks before Johnny Robins could hear at all and the doctors told him he would always be slightly deaf. Three fingers of his right hand, and two of his left, had to be amputated as gangrene had set in after frostbite.

Everything had gone according to Misty's plan. Cliff Kopak went with the crew to interrogation and had reported the destruction of an enemy aircraft, the ground-crew flight-sergeant had kept his secret, and Johnny Robins had gallantly refused to name those with whom he had flown. He was not charged, the Commanding Officer being a humane man who considered Johnny Robins sufficiently punished by physical disability.

The Canadians were posted away to a squadron long before Johnny was discharged from hospital and he never saw any of them again. One day, however, during the time that he was an up-patient, he did see a photograph of Cliff Kopak. It was in the magazine

*Flight*. As he read the printing beneath, Johnny Robins's heart began beating very fast. His Majesty, Johnny learned, had been graciously pleased to award the Distinguished Flying Cross to Pilot-Officer C. R. Kopak for courage displayed over an enemy target on his first operation. P/O Kopak had defended his aircraft with such skill as to shoot down one JU 88 and ward off the attacks of many more.

Johnny Robins looked at the stumps of his fingers, and he sighed.

WITHIN a month of his discharge from the R.A.F., Johnny Robins married Jean. She knew the true story of the Paris raid and she was very proud of her husband.

Because his crippled hands came under the heading of 'Self-Inflicted Injuries,' Johnny Robins was not given a service pension. That did not quench his spirit; instead, he learned to write with his left hand and eventually he became a clerk in a wholesaler's office.

It was the week after the birth of his daughter that the postman left a small registered packet at Johnny's house. It had been forwarded from the last R.A.F. station he had been at, and it contained a box. Inside the box was a silver medal wrapped in paper. And on the paper was written: 'I guess this is really yours. Thanks for the alibi. Cliff Kopak.'

July First Story: The first instalment of *The Case of Valentin Lecormier*, the tale of a French deserter, by Geoffrey Household.

## A Sonnet for the Elizabethan Age

*Suppose a strolling player should arise,  
And come to town to try his fortune there,  
A young aspiring poet, deeply wise,  
Who all our dearest secrets seems to share,  
Who finds again, in an atomic age,  
The inspiration for his lofty art  
In slighted maid, in too-intrusive sage,  
In tragic lovers destined soon to part,  
Who sees again, with sorrow most profound,  
Demented Lear lament a daughter's loss,  
And our suburban Hamlet, homeward bound,  
Accosted by a ghost at Charing Cross,  
And, seeing these, lives on with joy to see  
Miranda and her Prince, still-young and free.*

W. A. PAYNE.

# Coronation Hitches

A. J. FORREST

IF superb planning earns its true reward, no unrehearsed incident or untoward hitch will interrupt the beautiful ritual amid which our beloved young Queen will be crowned. The unexpected, however, occurs in Coronations as in all human undertakings. And it may well be that in years to come historians will remember some tiny incident, utterly superfluous to the sacred ceremonial, when all else is forgotten or passed by. No Coronation yet held in Westminster Abbey functioned exactly as prearranged, and many evoked curious incidents which helped to shape history and, with it, our island's destinies.

A SLIGHT mishap, but typical of the strain these events impose upon their distinguished performers, befell Archbishop Temple at King Edward VII's crowning. The Primate, nearly eighty years old, had discharged his onerous duties with exemplary care and precision until, after the Inthronisation, he knelt before the King to pronounce the words of fealty for himself and the Lords Spiritual. This done, his strength failed him and he could not rise. King Edward at once reacted to the Primate's predicament and, though but lately stricken himself with perityphlitis, stretched forth helping hands and raised the sagging figure to his feet. 'God bless you, Sir; God be with you,' murmured the Archbishop fervently.

More serious was the contretemps disturbing Queen Victoria at her June Coronation, a hundred and fifteen years ago. Again an Archbishop faltered, this time by thrusting the annulus or plain gold 'Wedding Ring of England' upon the wrong finger of the Queen's right hand. It should have been the fourth, the ancient marriage finger. The fierce squeeze almost caused the Queen to cry out with pain. Afterwards her finger had

to be soaked in iced water to free the ring. Then the peerage, the lords coroneted and sumptuously clad, with their ladies in glittering tiaras and flowing robes, suffered loss of dignity when Lord Rolle, about to pay fealty or homage, tripped over his mantle and crashed headlong before his Sovereign.

Happily, the long, intricate, and exacting ceremonial did not depress the young Queen or sap her vitality. As Lytton Strachey recorded: 'When she returned to Buckingham Palace at last, she was not tired; she ran up to her private rooms, doffed her splendours, and gave her dog Dash its evening bath.'

NOWADAYS, not only is the Coronation elaborately rehearsed, but the Earl Marshal, who bears responsibility for procedure, knows his drill down to the smallest detail, and items, essential to the ceremony's correct performance, will most assuredly not be forgotten or mislaid. This, also, was not always so. George III's Coronation might fairly be termed a series of crowning errors! From the outset, arrangements refused to run smoothly. The workmen engaged to erect stands in the Abbey went on strike for higher pay. Public controversy again rose to a bitter pitch because of extortionate charges levied on seats in the Abbey's vicinity. The Dean and Chapter of Westminster were themselves accused of gross profiteering or, to be more explicit, of barefaced money-grubbing. These preliminary hitches undoubtedly spread confusion in the mind of Lord Effingham, the Deputy Earl Marshal. Nearly witless before the ceremonial began, he angered first the Knights of the Bath by omitting to furnish them with their customary table. The canopy for the King and Queen had next to be improvised. Then, as the poor man's cardinal error, the entire ceremonial

## CORONATION HITCHES

came to a standstill while Abbey officials hunted for the Sword of State. The Archbishop stamped his feet impatiently, waiting to deliver it to the King's right hand, saying: 'Receive this kingly sword,' and, when it was girt about him, by the Lord Great Chamberlain, adding: 'With this sword do justice.'

The sword was not to be discovered. Fortunately the Lord Mayor of London unbuckled his own sword, a symbol of the City's independence, and it was used as a substitute. Afterwards the King soundly rated his Deputy Earl Marshal about his many lapses. Lord Effingham stumbled out his apologies, but stupidly observed, rubbing salt, as it were, into open wounds: 'Sire, I have taken care that the next Coronation shall be regulated in the exactest manner possible.'

The next Coronation, that of George IV, was, in fact, marred by this unworthy King's shameless treatment of his wife, Caroline. He excluded her from the ceremony, posting hired prize-fighters outside the Abbey doors to forestall any attempt at gate-crashing. The Queen tried hard, however, to obtain her rightful privileges. As Katharine Fry, a sharp-eyed observer of the Queen's discomfiture, wrote afterwards to her sister Rachel: 'At six o'clock our attention was roused by a great and confused cry; a mixture of cheers and groans, but in which the latter predominated. It was the Queen's carriage with its gay Royal liveries seen making its way to the Abbey. At half-past six our party went down to breakfast but were soon disturbed by a loud and continued yell; the most horrid noise I ever heard. We ran up to our places, and found that Her Majesty, foiled in her attempt at one door, was going to try to gain admittance at another, and was passing among the people and the soldiers between our gallery and the Royal platform.'

'A few of the lowest mob tried to cheer her, but all the rest of the world hissed and groaned in the most tremendous manner, and the mob finding which way the tide was going joined in.' Some sympathy survived, though, for the Queen whom George IV had tried vainly to divorce and divest of her title, for at Covent Garden that same evening, Coronation Night, when the company sang 'God Save the King,' odd voices in the auditorium shouted, in some instances with deafening emphasis: 'And bless the Queen.' Moreover,

we are told that 'the popularity of the amendment was testified by every species of applause.'

THE present ceremonial, founded on the style of Saxon ritual contained in a 10th-century sacramentary, is full of antique echoes. As the gorgeously empurpled and ennobled gathering surveys our gracious Queen, one will almost hear the Abbey's pillared walls trembling with precedent and prerogative. Once, the entire ceremonial was conducted in Latin. The Stuarts discontinued this practice, but it was revived for George I, because he knew no English and neither his spiritual nor his secular Ministers were able or desired to crown him in German. Yet, as the service illustrated, their grasp of the classical tongue had grown lamentably rusty. For some time afterwards it was a standing jest that never before had 'so much bad language been spilt on a sacred occasion.' To-day, there is but one surviving link with the ancient Latin service. In recognition of their anointed Queen, the boys of Westminster School will cry, as their ancient privilege allows: 'Vivat, vivat . . . Elizabeta Regina.' And that triumphant refrain should find echo, I think, not only in all corners of our great Commonwealth of peoples, but also throughout the entire world of freedom-loving, individuality-respecting nations.

Sometimes the tantrums of high ecclesiastical dignitaries, and of Kings and Queens themselves, have given rise to awkward situations. In 1121, on the occasion of Henry I's second marriage, Ralph, Archbishop of Canterbury, threatened to stop the service because the King had entered the church with the crown already on his head. The King had, of course, been crowned at his accession in 1100, Maurice, Bishop of London, officiating in the absence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, so the ceremony in 1121 was not really a Coronation but only a crown-wearing. Nevertheless, even at crown-wearings the Archbishop claimed it as his right to place the crown on the King's head. He asked Henry who had put it there, to which Henry gave no reply. When the Archbishop pointed out that whoever had done it had not done so of right, Henry said he was willing to do all the Primate asked. Thereupon, relates Eadmer in his *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, the Archbishop removed

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the crown from the King's head, then put it on again.

King John provoked an even more deplorable tumult. As a clear sign to all that he derived his power from God alone, so being independent of priestly offices or the counsels of precedent, he took the crown himself and fitted it on his head. It was a tyrant's act, foolish alike in vainglory and arrogance. Yet what a vast significance invested it, for out of such despotism Magna Carta was born, the very fountainhead of our great statutes of liberty and now age-honoured respect for the human personality.

Mary Tudor, 'Bloody Mary,' as history knows her, was another most cantankerous person. Because of her fervid Catholicism, she resolutely refused to be crowned on the same chair as that occupied by her Protestant consumptive half-brother, Edward VI. So, she alone of our succeeding Sovereigns was not crowned on Edward the Confessor's historic chair, but on a seat specially designed for her, to which the Pope first gave his blessing. She refused, too, to be anointed with holy oil from the 14th-century eagle-headed ampulla, because the oil stored therein had already been consecrated for Edward VI and was therefore, she avowed, polluted.

Although the ritual of the anointment, the Unction as it is called, is undoubtedly the most sacred rite in the Abbey ceremonial—it confers a spiritual stewardship upon Kings and Queens—Elizabeth I, as history records, thought but poorly of this endowment. 'This oil is grease and smells ill,' was her uncereemonious comment, an observation which, however distasteful to her spiritual peers, revealed the realistic stuff of which she was made.

Her Coronation, coming after her half-sister Mary's reign of terror, brought enormous relief to England's 4,000,000 or so inhabitants. The price of sixpence, a heavy sum in those times, was gladly paid for seats, not always the best, lining the processional route, and when the Queen was presented to her subjects, turning first to the south, then to the west, then to the north, their roars of acclamation were heartfelt as well as vibrant and deep-voiced. Organs, pipes, trumpets, and drums played. Bells rang wildly with Coronation peals. 'It seemed,' the Venetian Ambassador noted, 'as if the world were come to an end.' In reality, it was the inception of

a golden age. And may another Elizabethan age, fraught with such valiance and daring of spirit, such joy in achievement, poetry, and virility open upon us now.

If we search the records for drama, however, no Coronation created more stir in the Abbey than that of William the Conqueror. While the ritual unfolded within, the noise of shouting suddenly obtruded from without. The people, London's incorrigibly curious citizens, ceremonial-lovers, I think, even then, were but setting free their pent-up spirits. But the Captain of the Norman guard, stationed inside the Abbey with a large body of troops, mistook the multitude's cheers for the threat of open revolt. He ordered his men to sally forth and cut down the 'rioters.' So, all who did not instantly flee fell before Norman sword-strokes. Nor did this senseless massacre end the crisis. In rushing so frantically from the Abbey, several soldiers knocked down braziers and lighted candlesticks. Fires blazed forth. Much precious woodwork was consumed. And, but for the quick-minded action of the priests, ministering the Saxon rites to Norman William, this last conqueror of England by force of arms might easily have celebrated his enthronement amid a mass of flames.

It is, indeed, impossible to view the Abbey ceremonial to-day without feeling that the ghosts of history lie in attendance. Not all wear quiet or reassuring faces. The masks of vengeance, malignity, and grief, as well as of joy, dignity, and glory, all lurk there. Their presence adds a piquancy to the time-honoured scenes and does not, in my view, detract from their intrinsic ennoblement or spirituality. What is tradition worth unless first tried and proven by every variety of experience? And, if the venerated Abbey's nine-hundred-year-old witness of Coronation incidents emphasises one lesson above all others, it is surely the truth that Kings and Queens are but human creatures after all, and subject to the same frailties, virtues, and vicissitudes as ourselves.

*That antique pile behold,  
Where Royal heads receive the sacred gold.  
It gives them crowns, and does their ashes  
keep.*

*There made like gods, like mortals there  
they sleep.*

To-day, more markedly than ever before,



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since television- and cinema-cameras allow not a split-second's worth of relaxation, the Coronation ceremonial is a most exacting physical and nervous strain. The Queen deserves the well-wishes of everyone for the ordeal she must face.

While she is the world's focus at the moment, long to be preserved, we all trust, with God's aid as the gracious, beloved Sovereign of our proud commonwealth of peoples, who, I wonder, among the Abbey guests or sightseers, packing the processional route, has destiny already spotlighted for some future role of greatness? Someone assuredly. During Mary Tudor's crowning, her half-sister, the Princess Elizabeth, began fidgeting with her coronet. She found it, obviously, a heavy, cumbersome burden.

'Madam,' whispered the French Ambassador, careless of being branded a heretic, 'you must accustom yourself to a weight on your head, however uncomfortable, for soon it will be a crown.'

To Elizabeth herself, the supreme architect of England's golden age, falls the last word upon crowns. 'To be a King and wear a crown,' she said, 'is more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasure to them that bear it.' So, whatever incident this new crowning provokes, may its omens be happy ones. Our young Queen's burdens are immense. May God bless her, affording her, and all her subjects with their ancient rights and privileges faithfully preserved, peace, prosperity, and happiness in her reign. 'God Save the Queen.'

## Playhouse on Wheels

### *The Birth of the Century Theatre*

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MICHAEL JOHNS

WHICH makes the more interesting story—the man who invents a new way of committing murder, or the man who invents a new way of taking Shakespeare to the village green? Since the vocabulary of violence has become more familiar than the vocabulary of art, it is the former story which must inevitably capture the headlines. Nevertheless, it seems strange to me, even as a journalist, that more interest has not been aroused by the recent opening of the Century Theatre, the world's first completely self-contained playhouse on wheels. True, a discerning minority have welcomed it as a kind of 20th-century reincarnation of the old barn-stormers, those brave theatricals who lived like gipsies and played like kings. But not even the theatrical press has told the whole story.

As one of the first outsiders to become enthusiastic about the Century Theatre, when it was no more than a dream and a set of cardboard models, I tell its story now—an appropriate embellishment to what people are calling 'the new Elizabethan age.'

THE idea of the Century Theatre was conceived ten years ago by an engineer, John Ridley. He was working at the time in a remote district of Scotland. One of the worst hardships, as far as he was concerned, lay in the total lack of any kind of live entertainment. It always annoyed him that in an age of transport and communication the only thing which was not made easily accessible was the theatre. 'If the circus can travel a tent full of animals and performers and

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hundreds of stage-hands, we ought to be able to travel a theatre with only a dozen players,' he used to tell his wife.

Just to prove it was possible, he spent his spare time designing a complete and self-contained theatre on wheels. He envisaged not only stage, dressing-rooms, and auditorium built up out of wheeled units which could be locked into one, but also caravan accommodation for the actors, with generator, kitchen, and storage vehicles to make them independent of everything but a site.

Unfortunately, John Ridley had more imagination than capital, so he put his plans away in a drawer, where they might have remained to this day had he not moved to Hinckley, Leicestershire. Here the Ridleys found another way of striking a blow for the theatre. They helped to organise one- and two-night stands for the groups of travelling players which the brief war-time renaissance of the drama had encouraged to tour the theatreless districts of England.

Two such groups were the Adelphi and Compass Players. Nobody knew better than they the enthusiasm of the unspoiled villages, the mining and agricultural communities. Only that enthusiasm could make worth while the hazard and heartbreak of working without a theatre. Used to every kind of insecurity, from dubious lodgings to ill-equipped halls, they, perhaps more than John Ridley himself, saw what a mobile theatre could mean. It was inevitable that the more enthusiastic members should join forces to make his dream a reality.

Thus the Century Theatre scheme was born. In 1948 Ridley gave up his job to work for it as engineer and designer—and, more often than not, as labourer. Like all concerned, he was ready to sink his career in backing a very dark theatrical horse.

AS the only means of financing their project, the associates opened a public subscription-list. Then they started building their theatre, on ex-R.A.F. trailers, in an open workshop at Hinckley. They took on assistance when they could pay for it, and worked by themselves when funds sank low. In winter they froze, and in summer they watched the blackbirds building in the corners of their Heath Robinson workshop.

Two people who played an important part from the beginning of the scheme were R. H.

Ward, the producer and writer, and Wilfred Harrison, a young actor who for the time being threw up his stage career to become secretary and chief money-raiser.

The gifts he begged, in cash or kind, were turned into the stuff from which the others could build. But however desperately he worked, the money always fell behind the rocketing costs of building and living. Christmas 1949 found the friends penniless, with little to show for their efforts but some steel and aluminium skeletons in their back-yard. At an emergency meeting they decided to abandon the scheme and return to their old jobs—those of them who were lucky enough to have jobs. Then, out of the blue, came a cheque for £100.

The work went on, always precarious, but always exciting. The band registered themselves as a non-profit distributing company, and could thus apply for assistance to charitable trusts. They started a system whereby supporters could endow seats, as beds are endowed in a hospital. The plates they later screwed on the back of half their seats bore the names of many famous people in the world of theatre and art, and commerce.

Commercial undertakings all over the country showed great generosity in supplying goods and materials free or on long-term credit. Thousands of gifts ranged from a £2000 electric generator to the latest equipment and china for the kitchen-car.

Through the Development Commission, the Treasury contributed their share—and at last, after five years' building and begging, the Century Theatre was completed. Having started out to raise £7000, Wilfred Harrison and his friends found they had collected £20,000. They had begged almost all of it from door to door. Thus John Ridley saw the dream he had had in Scotland fulfilled in Hinckley, where the opening took place in October of last year.

THE finished theatre has a fully-equipped 18 by 30 foot stage, dressing-rooms fitted with all conveniences including wash-basins and a shower, and an electrically-heated, air-conditioned auditorium seating 225 people in comfortable tip-ups on a raked floor. Above all, it boasts that atmosphere of a bricks-and-mortar playhouse which can never be improvised. Indeed, the only difference between it and any other theatre is

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that the Century Theatre moves on at the end of the week. It can travel fifteen miles a day, including the striking and re-erection of the theatre.

At the end of a stand the stage staff lower the hydraulic pillars which support and lock the roof, the building is broken up into its four component vehicles, and a couple of tractors haul them away to the next site. Likewise, the company's living-quarters, the kitchen, dining-hall, generator vans, and even a bathroom, all take wheel and roll away in a caravan of sky-blue rectangular vehicles. The fleet of twenty includes a mobile box-office, which runs on ahead of the main company.

**B**UT no mere specifications can convey the atmosphere of the thing as it impressed itself on me on the opening night, when, appropriately enough, six-foot, bearded Wilfred Harrison played the name-part in Abraham Asseo's production of *Othello*.

After the show, which was disappointing only in the fact that none of the invited national press turned up, I sat on the steps of one of the caravans, a lonely spectator at what seemed a historic occasion. The caravans looked like blue bricks piled against the deeper blue of the autumn night. Every now and then the letters of 'Century Theatre' would flash up in a splash of gold as somebody opened a door. Voices and laughter sounded from the long dining-car. An engineer shone his torch on the cables of the humming generator, and I suddenly thought—this is the big top, only the show that must go on is not horses and acrobats, but Shakespeare. It seemed a wonderful story.

I had thought so when I had first met Wilfred Harrison exhibiting models of the theatre in a grimy northern town. It seemed unbelievable that those models were real now, there in front of me. They had absorbed five years of their builders' lives.

I had just seen Wilfred Harrison make *Othello* credible, both as a soldier and as a lover. But his deep yet finely-tempered voice, with never a trace of self-pity, had not spoken more tenderly of Desdemona than of those cardboard models when he had explained them to me. 'We will make them real. We will make them *feel* like a theatre,' he had said. Now, on the caravan steps, I knew what he meant. For me, even an outsider, it was an

almost agonising meeting-point of dream and reality.

What of the reality, the future? They would be sure of their audiences, at least at the beginning. They planned to tour every theatreless town in the British Isles. Who would be able to resist the mechanical dynamic of those twenty sky-blue wagons with their strange-shaped haulage-tractors? The caravans had smoking chimneys; only the women did not wear shawls and the men, though mostly bearded, had no rings in their ears. Otherwise, they might have been some fantastic band of mechanised gypsies.

The public would come, as they had come for the bearded woman and the 40-stone man. This time the novelty would be that of sitting in a perfectly solid theatre, with programme-sellers in evening-dress, and knowing that in a day or two the whole thing would pack itself up and go rolling past one's front-door.

Could the players' art stand such mechanical competition? I thought it could. During rehearsals I had seen founder-members of the company using physical difficulties as a springboard. After all, for many of them the building itself was a manifestation of their ideals, the mark of their integrity. The group was also held together by the essentially human bond of being co-operative. When he had wiped off his make-up from *Othello*, Wilfred Harrison would drive one of the tractors. Such a theatre must always make enough demands to be selective.

Would it be too much to suggest that the struggle of these young actors and actresses was not altogether a bad thing? Provided they do not starve in the process, artists tend to find their form in battles with the intractable, like having too little money. Goodness knows, Hollywood films have shown us the dangers of having too much.

Sitting on the caravan steps on that opening night, I recalled how, during the War, fit-up companies like the Adelphi Players had sometimes lifted a scene right through the roof of the village hall and kept it there—until the lights fused or the curtains stuck. It struck me that the Century Theatre would do the same thing, only more regularly and with fewer distracting personal hazards like unsuitable halls and unwelcoming lodgings. And if they succeeded, surplus profits could never become a luxury. They would be sunk in a bricks-and-mortar theatre to provide

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the company with a permanent home and give road-weary members the chance of a rest.

I JOTTED down those comments in the heat of the moment. Now, with the Century Theatre well into its second tour, and judging by reports from the company, I can find no reason to think I was over-optimistic.

On its first tour, with *Othello*, the theatre averaged 88 per cent capacity houses until, in the words of one of the company, 'the snow and ice started keeping folk indoors.' More than once they put up 'House Full' notices, and in several cases the tour had to be replanned to allow for stands of a week where three days had been anticipated.

As I guessed they would, the players got some interesting experience of audience-reaction from the diverse communities they visited. According to Wilfred Harrison: 'The sophisticated tended to be not very self-giving at first; the unsophisticated were always warm.' At Bodicote, near Banbury, an old man of eighty saw *Othello* as his first Shakespeare play—and came three times. I dare say there are plenty of stories like that.

For its current tour, which opened at Worcester, Century Theatre has added another play to its repertoire—*A Man of God*, by Gabriel Marcel, translated from the French by Marjorie Gabain. The play, a domestic drama of an Ibsen-like quality, but less gloomy, was received as enthusiastically as *Othello*. Its distinguished French author

himself was in the audience. But, despite the company's invitations, the national press, with one exception, still did not find it worth their while to put in an appearance. 'We're not interested in little theatres—there are thousands of 'em,' the feature editor of a national daily told me before I had got out half-a-dozen words about Century Theatre.

That is the trouble. Century Theatre sounds nothing until one has seen it and realised its standard and mobility, a mobility which, in a twelve-week tour, gives this theatre, however 'little,' a potential capacity of over 10,000 seats in districts with no theatre at all.

Summing up with a philosophic shrug, Wilfred Harrison, who should know, made this comment: 'Artistically, the theatre has been a success—except that no real artist can ever believe that of his own work. Financially, we should like to do better. The theatre works, moves, is comfortable to sit in. *We can put on a show that is liked*. But it is difficult to convince people of this in advance. They do not expect a good building, nor has our cast any star names. Hence the value of national publicity, which we have not so far had.'

Once more my mind flashes back to that very first night. I am still sitting on the steps of the caravan. It is late, or nearly early. The first thrill of achievement is simmering down towards the silent criticism of the small hours. Against the kitchen-car windows, silhouettes of Desdemona and Iago are washing up. . .

I still think this is a good story.

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## The Spendthrift and the Miser

*The earth is glowing with scattered gold.  
The spendthrift sun is on the spree,  
Splitting the gloom in the dusky room,  
Lighting a Catherine-wheel in me.*

*The sheen of a skin of glitt'ring rain  
Gilds the roofs, the domes, the walls;  
The gutters run with the molten sun,  
In gentle showers its lava falls.*

*The spendthrift sun is on the spree,  
Tossing we beggars princely sums.  
With miser's care I store my share  
To keep me rich when winter comes.*

TOM WRIGHT.





## Caddy Linguist

SYLVIA CRANE

NOT long after I joined my family in Japan during the Occupation a pre-war friend persuaded me to conduct a weekly seminar in English conversation at a Japanese school. Thousands of students, young and old, wanted to study our language and there were not nearly enough teachers to go round. Classes were jammed in violation of all fire laws, and for those who could not gain admission there was the radio, which broadcast 'useful English phrases' and suggested ways in which they could be applied in daily life.

My mother and father, to whom all this recalled the peaceful, pre-militaristic years in Tokyo, were fond of regaling me with tales concerning the popularity and misuse of the English language in that now far-distant period. To hear the old-timers tell it, a foreigner could hardly set foot upon the streets of Tokyo without being mobbed by eager conversationalists full of 'useful English phrases.'

'Sir-or-madam-as-the-case-may-be,' the students invariably began. On a busy sidewalk, they would urge one to 'take my seat, please.' In the dead of winter they would inquire solicitously if you were enjoying 'the beautiful cherry-flower, national flower of Japan.' On one occasion my aunt was hailed

by a lad on a bicycle. 'I love you,' he announced earnestly, and pedalled on down the street.

Although I was born and being brought up in Japan at the same time that all this was going on, I never seemed to run into similar situations. I guess children are eminently practical. I was, for a few years, much more comfortable speaking Japanese than English and refused to waste time struggling with one language when everything could be accomplished so much more rapidly in the other. But in the world of my elders there was a fifty-fifty chance that their Japanese was no better than some university student's English, and it was everyone for himself.

BEFORE the military clique came into power with its bans on Western cultural practices there was a daily English language radio programme much like the one which became so popular during the Occupation. Each evening the radio teacher would dole out a new phrase and each morning his listening public would swarm into the streets, trains, buses, and trolleys armed with their linguistic weapons and determined to use them at all costs.

## CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

One evening, according to my father, the radio teacher gave considerable attention to the use of 'Excuse me.' 'Excuse . . . me,' he articulated slowly, pausing so that all could repeat it. '*Gomen-nasai*. Excuse . . . me. Excuse me.' Again, a short silence. 'Now, of course you must practise this new useful phrase you have learned. So, if you should see a foreigner on the street or in the tramcar to-morrow, I suggest that you brush against him or step on his toe. Accidentally, to be sure. Ha, ha, ha! Then, very politely, you will bow to him and say: 'Excuse . . . me. Excuse me.'

Next morning my father was at the rear of a crowded trolley-car, hanging to a strap, when a blue-uniformed youth got aboard. Since Dad is six feet two, the student had no trouble in finding him. Sheer joy transformed the boy's face and, fairly stuffed with his 'useful English phrase,' he began pushing the other passengers aside in an effort to achieve the other end of the car. At last, breathless, he made it. Carefully, he trod on my father's toe. 'Excuse . . . me. Excuse me,' he repeated.

My father grinned back at him. He disengaged his foot. '*Kamaimasen*,' he replied cheerfully, bearing down on the student's instep. 'Think . . . nothing . . . of . . . it.' He kept his foot down. 'Think nothing of it. Think nothing of it.'

When Dad repeated this anecdote in my school-teaching days, I listened, and even laughed. Then I went off to my seminar and told the class: 'Use English every chance you get. Try to converse with foreigners, because it is most important to hear the proper accent.'

I banned the use of Japanese in the classroom and those who were guilty of whispering to one another in the mother-tongue had to make five-minute speeches before their colleagues. Often I was tempted to straighten out some hopeless linguistic snarl by resorting to Japanese myself, but my loss of face would have been incalculable had I so sinned. English, always English.

'If you are looking for a job after school hours, try to be a waiter or an elevator-boy in an American billet. If you really want to learn, go where the foreigners are.' This was the official line in all language classes. What better advice could we give, after all? I'd—uh—still say the same thing. Yes, sir (or madam, etc.)!

THEN, one summer day during our vacation, my father and I went out for a day's golf in the mountains. The air was clear and cool, the fairways lush and smooth under the bright sun. In such a climate I felt confident—almost professional. The course, vivid in colour, invited me like a precious gem in the distance, and I thought this day I will outdo myself.

Over-enthusiastic, I topped my drive, but I was not dissatisfied. The ball had gone a reasonable distance in spite of it. Nothing could mar this day, and I wished it would continue for ever.

Then the caddy spoke. 'Is this the first time you have ever play golf?'

I'm not entirely sure, but I think I saw a thundercloud building up near the horizon. 'No,' I answered in Japanese.

'Please,' he protested as we walked together. 'I am student at Nagano Normal School. I want very much learn English. So I am caddy because many Americans play golf. Please speak English to-day.'

So earnest was his attitude that one had to soften. 'All right,' I agreed.

We reached my ball and I selected a club. A ditch stretched between me and the little fluttering banner which marked the green, but I should have no trouble crossing it, no trouble at all.

Just as I was on the point of hitting, the caddy asked: 'How do you like Japan?'

Swallowing hard, I lowered the club. 'I like Japan very much.' I sliced the ball into the ditch, and it buried itself in the deep slime under the water.

'I am sorry,' said the caddy, 'for your bad play. When did you come Japan?'

'I was born here,' I replied, fighting a dangerous impulse.

'Oh.' The youth nodded, knowingly. 'Where were you born in America?'

Somehow we got the facts straightened out. My father was waiting on the green and people were impatiently shouting 'Fore!' on the tee behind us.

'Come,' I said. 'Others are waiting.'

Ridiculous to let a thing like this get you down. Will-power. Self-control. Concentration. After all, the kid was eager. Showed great enterprise taking a caddying job to brush up his English. Great enterprise and resourcefulness. He should be encouraged. Besides, I could not lose my rag with him. In Japan women must not lose their tempers

## CADDY LINGUIST

with men. One harsh word, the barest reprimand, and I would lose face. I thought of my seminar back in Tokyo, and ground my teeth to shut the temper in.

GOLFERS and fishermen are much alike

Foster. 'And the trouble is,' I almost sobbed, 'I can't tell him off!'

My father laughed long and heartily. 'Oh, Lord!' he choked. "'My Old Kentucky Home'"! What's the matter? Don't you have any will-power? You shouldn't let a little thing like that get you down.'

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FIRE MARINE  
ACCIDENT

P.T.O.

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## CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

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Over-enthusiastic, I topped my drive, but I was not dissatisfied. The ball had gone a distance in spite of it. Nothing



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with men. One harsh word, the barest reprimand, and I would lose face. I thought of my seminar back in Tokyo, and ground my teeth to shut the temper in.

**G**OLFERS and fishermen are much alike when it comes to excusing themselves for an unsuccessful outing, but I stand firm on the facts. During the first three holes, I managed to invade every trap, pond, swamp, and thicket within range. The caddy showed a laudable talent for silence while we walked, or searched for lost balls. But each time I raised my club for a shot, he measured out a new query: 'How old are you?' 'Are you married?' 'Why are you not married?'

These questions I answered as best I could, amiably chopping the ball in the approximate direction of the green. The pain had given way to a quasi-lunatic delirium, and I felt my features holding a perpetual grin.

'How many children have you?'

'Sixteen.'

'Oh, very good!'

Had I used a butterfly-net on the fourth tee, I couldn't have hit a more miserable drive. Just as I lifted the club for a second shot, the caddy inquired brightly: 'Do you know "My Old Kentucky Home"?''

"The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home," I chanted through my teeth.

'Yes! Yes!' he shouted delightedly.

"'Tis summer, the darkies are gay," I continued. Taking a furious cut at the ball, I was vaguely surprised to see it fly off in a long, soaring arc.

'Good shot!' cried my stunned caddy.

"Weep no more, my lady," I sang, "'Oh, weep no more to-day! We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home'"—the caddy joined in—"for the old Kentucky home far away."

The fifth hole at this course leads back to the clubhouse. It is a sharply-turning dog-leg, six hundred yards, par five. 'I'm going to chuck it after this one,' I told my father. Later I would break the real news to him. I was giving up golf. Never again would I look at a club, a ball, a tee.

Dad did not argue. 'Your game *has* been pretty bad. Maybe you need a break. What's the matter with you to-day?'

So I told him about the caddy and Stephen

Foster. 'And the trouble is,' I almost sobbed, 'I can't tell him off!'

My father laughed long and heartily. 'Oh, Lord!' he choked. "'My Old Kentucky Home"! What's the matter? Don't you have any will-power? You shouldn't let a little thing like that get you down.'

'Well, it *has* got me down. So I'm giving up while I have a shred of sanity left.'

'Tell you what,' Dad suggested, 'I'll swap caddies with you right away.' He walked over and changed the two golf-bags on the boys' shoulders.

Peace and freedom—wonderful intangibles! I had a par at the hole. I had never done it before—and I have not done it since. As for my father, I don't think it's sporting to quote his score for that hole.

Before beginning the sixth we rested while my father took the young linguist aside to deliver a short lecture on caddy manners. It must have been a good speech. The boy's spirit was unbroken and he continued to chat. But now he practised his 'useful English phrases' between, not during, shots. We finished the round without further trouble.

'Well,' my father said afterwards, 'I think he learned something. Not a bad kid, really. Just green. See what I mean now? For their own safety you've got to tell them there's a time and place for speaking English.'

**L**ATER in the summer, waiting behind a foursome on the first tee, I met the same caddy. He nodded his greeting and warned me to be quiet by putting a finger to his lips, for his man was about to drive. The golfer, powerfully built, addressed the ball with professional confidence. He swung easily and the shot whistled straight and soaring over the fairway for nearly three hundred yards. 'Didn't want to hit the ditch,' he explained. 'They put that thing right where it'd catch my drive.'

His three friends congratulated him, and they started swiftly away, caddies jogging after them with a rattle of clubs.

Our bilingual friend caught up with his man and they were almost out of earshot when I heard him inquire in a clear, eager voice: 'Is this the first time you have ever play golf?'

# The Waler

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HENRY G. LAMOND

'WALER' was the trade-term for the old-time Australian horse. That was the fellow who was exported to India as a remount for cavalry; who carried his name and fame to other parts of the world; about which poets sang and diehards boasted. Candidly, there never was such a horse. That dream may be worth analysis.

The composite picture gives us a bay gelding, black points, a star on his forehead. He is rather rakish, standing, say, 15.2 hands. He has a lean and game head, a long rein, flat bone, sprung like a barrel, sloping shoulders, and the heroes of mythology fade into nothing when compared in the matter of pluck with this paragon of the imagination. He is sure on his feet over the roughest country in the darkest night; he can take fences and broken gullies in his stride; he could wheel a bullock in scrub or on the plain; next day he could saddle up and win 'The Purse' at the local races. He was of the cut-and-come-again variety: he would carry his rider there and bring him back again.

Dealing further with this mythical vision. He never had a rope thrown on him until he was six years old; the first day he was saddled he carried his rider forty miles; next day he returned with him. Is it any wonder they sang songs about him?

The term 'Waler,' it is presumed, was derived from the original colony in Australia—New South Wales. When stock, particularly horses, were bred in numbers to give an exportable surplus, they had to have a trade-name. They were good—by all standards they were good, but, and though no reference is ever made to them, there must also have been the dregs which were useless. Good horses are bred to-day; there is also the usual percentage of worthless rubbish. It always has been that way.

Without trying to deal with the hazy

picture of the first Walers, and going back a mere sixty years or so of personal observation and handling horses on the hoof, I shall try to show how Walers were bred, referring in what I say only to the out-back areas of the state of Queensland, where distances are long and spaces wide.

ALMOST invariably an English Thoroughbred sire was the stallion used. There never was, there never will be, anything quite as good as the Thoroughbred. Men who should know better prate largely about the Arab, about various breeds of ponies; some miscreants use a home-bred sire whose parentage is lost in the dim shades of a mulga scrub. Strangely enough, with nothing to back their fancy other than rude words and uncouth speech, those advocates make the most noise. The English Thoroughbred does not depend upon noise: it is built on facts.

Assuming there is a Thoroughbred sire—and a breeder has enough variety from which to choose to let his fancy run free—the next thing is to supply him with a brood of mares. That, usually, is the stumbling-block. Goodness knows, common logic should dictate that a good sire can only prove his worth on good mares. Many of the mares given that stallion are wastrels, weaklings, things not good enough to work. 'She'll breed a foal. We'll put her to the stallion,' they say. The mare which is a gem, which will saddle up to-day and come again to-morrow, which has character, pluck, and endurance—she is worked, and kept in work, until she has only a frame to offer her mate. The vitality which she should hand on to progeny is sapped from her.

This stallion must have a name. He can be termed 'Eclipse,' after that taproot of the Stud Book. He is put out-bush with his brood

of anything up to fifty mares. 'Bush' may mean an unfenced area; it might refer to a paddock six miles square. That is scope. Young horses need room in which to roam. For preference, it is a pebbly range of country. Pebbles keep young horses' hooves trimmed, make them hard, shapely, and small. It is good for the mares to walk distances to water and out to feed. The youngsters require open spaces where they can exercise their growing bodies, stretch their muscles, indulge in races, scamper and play. It is good for Eclipse to have plenty of exercise. The grass is sweet, the pastures sound, the waterhole a fine place in which to paw the water, stir up mud, roll and bathe.

A good sire begets about thirty foals a year under those natural conditions. Exceptional instances run up to fifty and more. A dominant sire like Eclipse keeps his mares in one mob, under his direction, all subject to his will. He resents strangers. He hunts strays which strive to barge into his mob. Others, not so careful, let their mares wander where they will, coming together by some intuition or telepathic summons at appointed times. Perhaps the waterhole is a recognised meeting-place. But, and this is the strong point, they run under conditions as near to nature as it is possible to give them.

**T**HE brood is mustered for branding. Eclipse, lord of the mob, undisputed king, arrogant to a degree, resents men on horses putting his mares together and driving them where they wish, and without consulting him. He may have been well trained in his early youth—he may recognise the fact that it is a necessary bit of work. Eclipse may have forgotten his early training—he resents that treatment. Perhaps he objects to the man in front who is steadying the lead; he might take umbrage at the men at the tail who are driving the mob.

There are no set rules for dealing with a refractory stallion. A man must be guided by circumstances. Tact is a good idea. Finesse is a hard word to spell, usually beyond the compass of an ordinary stockman. A stallion—and this is written from experience—is a deucedly awkward thing to fight. Don Quixote and his famed windmill isn't in the same street as an annoyed stallion. The whole is a queer kettle of fish, which requires delicate and expert juggling: foals

which have never seen a man before, which are wild and timid—those little things have breeding and an inherent desire to race; mares which are troubled, anxious, add to the medley by their patent fears; then, to top off, there is a stallion which resents any interference with his mob! A man must make a show of force, without pressing it too far. He must be prepared to concede disputed points, without having kindness mistaken for fear. Perhaps those men are wasted in the bush: they should be in the diplomatic corps.

The mob is yarded. In the best circles it is always considered advisable to let them stay in the yard overnight. That cools tempers, allays fevered imaginations, lets the youngsters meet any operation on the morrow with an empty stomach. They settle down during the night.

What a scatter when the men come to the yards in the morning! Eclipse seems to forget he was ever stall-fed, dependent on man for his food and drink. The mares do not remember the time they were brought to the yards in the morning, caught, saddled, did a day's work. The foals have nothing to forget or remember: they have never been in a yard before; this is the first time in their lives they have seen men on foot.

That wave of indignation and terror soon passes. The horses, and that generic term covers all classes in the yard, are drafted up the lane and into the pound. Brancers go into the round yard. That is not a bulk drafting: they are worked one at a time.

When that foal is roped, when it rears, bucks, squeals, and chokes, the old mare, its mother, goes mad in her anxiety. She runs aimlessly, peers through rails, calls and neighs till her flabby flanks flap. Her eyes stare and she calls again when that foal goes down in a flurry of dust; she wheels and summons high heaven to witness the indignity when the sharp tang of burning hair and hide comes to her as the brand bites in. She runs to greet her foal, nuzzles it, soothes it, when that youngster, dusty and dishevelled, comes out of the round yard. She tries to lead it away. When blocked by the rails of the yard she stands in some corner and suckles it.

Eclipse paws the ground, snorts stertorously, pretends to be alarmed and upset for a foal or two. After that he draws on back recesses of his brain and remembers similar happenings in the past. He dozes, one hindleg resting,

## CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

knowing it is all part of a young horse's education.

Fillies are branded; colts are branded and castrated; all are entered in the Horse Book—breeding, full description, sex, number. Say, to state a case: 'U 9 L over 386, near shoulder. By Eclipse from Babette. Brown filly; near fore and off hind feet white; star and snip.'

**W**ITHOUT entering into the intricacies of handling colts after emasculation, let it suffice to say that those mares and foals are again mustered in about a month or less. This time the babies are weaned.

Eclipse and his mares go back to Pigeon Paddock to follow the same routine for another year. Apart from births and deaths, perhaps a new mare added to the brood, they live the same life so long as seasons are normal. If a drought comes, and waterholes dry, then the routine is broken as circumstances dictate.

The weaning process is perhaps the greatest to date in the three shocks of the foals' lives. The first was being born—which they do not remember. The second was the branding—and they were all too excited for that experience to cut a clear record. This weaning is a serious thing: it breaks a lifelong association; at an average age of ten months those little things have to fend for themselves. It is most upsetting! The noise those foals make would imply it is a catastrophe.

Those youngsters soon settle down. It is always advisable to put them in a paddock with older horses—spelling, that is, resting, workers, unbroken colts, derelicts, and pensioners. Horses, like humans, are imitative. Perhaps they have more sense: they are gifted with an instinct which really works. They soon learn the rules of the road and the way to water. They mate up with those of similar inclinations; in next to no time they find what they consider are the best feeding-grounds; they learn which older horses are unsociable; they find mates and form cliques.

Time rolls on and a year or several years pass. The colts—and that term means both sexes—learn all the time. It might be right to say that, at one year old, the foals think they know everything. At two years they have begun to find out they know nothing. That is the stage at which their real education commences. Mounted men ride through that

paddock occasionally and, as fresh horses are needed for the stock-camps, the colts are mustered and drafted through the yards. The colts begin to learn what they have to do—and what they must not do.

Looking at it from a human point of view, perhaps the happiest days of a horse's life are from the time it turns two years old until it is broken in and set to work. At two years its main teething troubles have passed, though many others have to come. It is grown to an extent it can balance itself, control its limbs, has the weight to be slightly offensive should the occasion demand such a course. It is self-reliant, educated enough to take care of itself, and it has no worries which it cannot toss aside with a shake of its head. Miles mean nothing to it: the thing is almost as free as a bird on the wing. It has nothing to do other than grow and develop.

They play also. Imagine a morning in April, the green not yet gone from the grass after the wet season, summer's heat abated, just a touch of ice in the wind which pours from the south-east. The world is clean, crisp, beautiful. Spider's webs lie in the grass like laces of pearl; magpies flute as dawn breaks; corellas and galahs screech their joy as they test their wings in the early morning; everything is full of life.

That goes to the heads of a mob of colts which stand on a crest of the high downs. One young fellow turns his head, nips playfully to draw the attention of the filly beside him to a shadow which is moving over the grass. That filly, and it may be Babette's foal, squeals her indignation. Really, she is not indignant. If anything, she appreciates the little attention shown her. Etiquette and tradition demand she should object. She squeals again—in case the first protest was not heard—and she swings slowly enough for a sloth to get out of the way before she lashes playfully with her hind hooves.

That starts it! Cora's filly thinks she should squeal; Bonny's colt reckons he should kick. A dozen youngsters are merged in a mock mêlée. Then, when war is being waged, when the attack and defence are at their height, a sudden idea impinges on a dozen little brains: they start together, no signal given, and they race. Kicking, bucking, scampering over the grass, spurning pebbles and dust, indulging in individual duels, competing against the mob, manes flying, tails sprayed, heads tossing, and a devil's tattoo of the mock



## THE WALER

thunder of galloping hooves, they race with no definite aim, no goal to mark the finish—just for the joy of life and the glory of living!

THE colt passes the three-year-old mark. The manager of the station sits on a rail of the yard and checks the youngsters as they pass through. He picks out those which are old enough to be broken to man's ways and work. In most cases, though the recognised breaking age is three years, a colt is four-off before it is broken on a big station. By that time he or she is developed sufficiently to bear the white man's burden; it would be wasting power and spending the comparatively short working life of a station horse in an extravagant manner to let it go over four years. Roughly speaking, and not restricted to a minute or two, the first working year of a horse's life is purely educational. It is not set in the ways of man; it can work, and do good work, but that work must be selected for it. After that first year it is a seasoned worker. Its active working life starts to taper off at about twelve years, accidents excepted.

The professional breaker gets his draft. As there are more ways of breaking a colt than of making a rissole, and as many arguments about it, neither is touched upon. It can be taken for granted that the colt is efficiently broken—and what a detestable word that 'broken' is! It is misapplied. A good and competent breaker can do about three a week. If stockmen are there to take them from him, he can do more; if he has to keep them in hand himself until men are ready to take them, he has to limit himself to less.

Positively, with odd exceptions allowed, and in spite of any ballyhoo to the contrary, a colt does not buck badly at his breaking. It may have the intentions, the inclinations; but it lacks the ability. It cannot balance its strange load of a man on top. It is clumsy. That clumsiness may make it awkward to ride when it tries to buck. But it has not the finished artistry, the skill, the fractional ability to buck properly, when fresh from the breaker's hands. It may try. It can't. That is, speaking as something of a connoisseur, the flavour of real buck-jumping just is not there in the colt's first awkward efforts. By-and-by, when it has learned to balance, when it gets over its wild fear of man, and treats him as a mathematical problem to be solved—then it may buck. But when green

and raw—no! It can try. It can't get past trying.

The horse, a colt no longer, goes out to the stock-camp. Every man on a big station has approximately eight horses to ride. The general rule is that two of them are in camp at one time. The other six are out spelling, picking up condition, perhaps helping to teach weaners the straight and narrow. The horses are ridden on alternate days. If there is a horse-paddock at the camp, then the horses are spelled in there during the day and let go at night. If there is no horse-paddock, then the camp horses live in hobbles. They might secretly prefer the hobbles; the paddock of, say, 1500 acres is usually eaten out of good grass. That is the only feed a station horse gets—natural grazing.

THOUGH the Waler of old is not in the land—and never was a reality—these horses of to-day and of near years in the past can put up quite good efforts. Not one of them ever did, or ever could, carry a man forty miles the first day it was saddled. If it did, or if it tried, then its spirit was broken and its heart ruined for ever. A soured horse is an abomination. When a station horse is seasoned, it is a poor thing which cannot carry its rider fifty miles between sun and sun—rise and set—and come home with its head high, its tail swinging, playing with the bit as it walks. Many of them will saddle up again on the morrow and lay another fifty behind them. It is not fair to any horse to ask it to do the same the third day in succession.

Many tales are told of single horses being ridden a hundred miles between sun and sun. Many of those tales are false. The teller is genuine enough; the miles exist in the imagination. It has been done in reality—done many times. Again, speaking from personal experience, the man deserves as great credit as the horse. Few men can stand the strain of one hundred miles in the saddle without a break. The horse might come up again on the third day for the third lap of fifty miles; the man needs to be well trained to take it.

That might be considered a rough outline of the breeding, life, and work of the comparatively modern Waler. Walers have carried Australia in the past; they will carry the country in the future; the present is a bit too unsettled to say what is doing which.

Those horses work the large areas; they wheel 'em in the gidy and block 'em on the plain. They swim flooded rivers, carry packs, go fifty miles between drinks, sob their distress when they are tired, when the salt

sweat gathers on their flanks and at the base of the ears. But they hold their heads high; they refuse to surrender; they carry nobly their grand heritage of the English Thoroughbred horse.

## The Seaside is Big Business Now

FRANK MOSS

TO the holidaymaker his favourite seaside resort means a fortnight's fun and relaxation. To those who live and work in the town arranging for that fun and relaxation it is big business. Many millions of pounds have been invested in our big seaside resorts and every year they budget for large expenditure under a hundred heads from life-guards to floral displays, in the belief that holidaymakers in their thousand will fill their beaches, boarding-houses, and hotels. On nearly all their enterprises, the local authorities are likely to lose money. But their budgets are made on the assumption that what is lost in providing amenities comes back as prosperity for the town, providing employment for thousands and buoyancy in the rates.

THE tastes of holidaymakers vary, but ninety-nine out of a hundred think of a seaside holiday in terms of bathing and relaxing in a deck-chair. Time was when if you wanted to bathe you just plunged into the sea. Now the holidaymaker demands a 'Lido' or swimming-pool, or at very least a bathing-station with changing-rooms and lifeguards. These can cost money. For instance, in the last year for which detailed figures are available, Brighton spent over £4200 on its bathing-stations, and received back only £560. Its beach first-aid posts cost £137 and, of course, brought no return. A paddling-pool for children costs nearly

£800 to maintain, but yields nothing, and the bathing-pools are run at a loss, costing nearly £32,000 and bringing in something like £23,000.

The deck-chair that is taken for granted is now big business. The size of the investment in deck-chairs can be judged from the fact that Margate has had to spend £10,600 in replacing only those that floated out to sea during the great winter storm. Last year holidaymakers in this resort alone took 1,250,000 deck-chair tickets and paid £42,000. This is not, of course, all profit. Against the fine days when every chair is occupied have to be placed those days when only the hardy sit out of doors and the attendants collect less than they are paid. But at most resorts deck-chairs are more or less self-supporting. They would probably be very profitable if it were not for the high rate of damage and loss. The losses are difficult to understand, and one can only suppose that chairs are caught by the tide in spite of the vigilance of attendants, or are carried off in motor-cars.

Providing for motorists is one of the major problems of the popular seaside resorts. The resorts are not legally entitled to enforce a charge for parking on the public highway, but many do in fact ask for a voluntary charge to cover the cost of attendants. The cost of maintaining car-parks may be double or treble the sums received. For instance, one Brighton car-park cost £1500 to maintain, and took only £655.

## THE SEASIDE IS BIG BUSINESS NOW

**I**N recent years some seaside resorts have entered the catering business in quite a big way and made it profitable. Margate, starting with nothing in 1946, now has fifty-two selling-points and last year made a gross profit of £21,000, which, even after charging rent, loans, tax, etc., meant a contribution to the general rate of 3d. in the £. One of the drains on the catering departments is the high rate of loss and breakage at the seaside—5000 teaspoons had to be purchased as replacement and 5000 cups were lost, broken, or stolen in a single season! The figures do not sound quite so high, perhaps, when it is remembered that on Bank Holiday alone up to 250,000 people may be on the nine miles of the borough.

Catering generally is a profitable or at least self-balancing item in the seaside resort budget. It is often forgotten that the towns we know purely as seaside resorts are also the home towns of a large population and what is made on catering for holidaymakers may be lost on civic catering for residents. Then there are the visitors that are entertained for nothing. In these days of keen competition between resorts, especially to secure big conferences which bring an influx of visitors in the off-season and much publicity to the town, it is usual for the authorities to give a civic reception. Before the War the provision of free entertainment and facilities had reached the point where the leading resorts had to agree to limit it to prevent cut-throat competition, but, even with present limitations, the cost can be high. Last year, for instance, Eastbourne had 46 conferences at which 12,630 delegates were entertained at a cost of about 10s. a head.

**A** MAJOR item for most resorts in running their business is simply preserving the beaches and promenades which are their chief attraction. In the present century the resorts have spent many millions of pounds in keeping back the hungry sea or in building improved esplanades. Margate's estimate for simply interim sea defence-works this year is £42,000. The promenade and sea-wall at Blackpool alone has absorbed more than £1,500,000 and huge additional sums have been spent, such as £42,000 on the four-deck Colonnades and £320,000 on landscape-gardens. Beach lifts have to be built and run, generally at a loss.

The cost of the now-expected flower-filled beds and pleasant parks is considerable. Eastbourne's net expenditure, for instance, is £36,000, and this has to come out of the rates. Many resorts are now property owners on a large scale, owning or controlling thousands of acres considered necessary for their amenities. Brighton lists expenditure in a single year of about £110,000 on parks, recreation-grounds, and golf-courses, apart from the cost of trees in the street and administration costs. Only a fraction of this can be recovered, of course. The only profitable enterprise of this kind is likely to be miniature golf-courses, which are a never-ending source of attraction.

Enterprising towns now buy land simply to preserve the view or for public use. To preserve the Downs near by, Eastbourne recently spent over £100,000 on four thousand acres. It will continue to be farmed, but will result in a loss every year of £6000 or £7000—not a high price for maintaining a view and providing pleasant walks. A similar sum, by the way, has been spent by Eastbourne in the last five years on coastal defence-works. Some of the vast sums spent on defence-works and development of the front are returned in rents. Beach concessions and rents brought Brighton over £6000, and chalets, seashore arches, etc., over £22,000.

**T**HE modern holidaymaker at a popular resort expects good entertainment to help while away his evenings or a wet afternoon. The Punch and Judy show on the beach or the pierrots in a makeshift open-air theatre may still be there, but the holidaymaker also expects shows as lavish as he could see in the Metropolis and all the stars of the entertainment world. In the season, the stars may well find the big resorts more profitable than London theatres and may draw huge salaries for short periods. Although the local authorities are invading the field of entertainment, this still remains largely in the hands of private enterprise.

Blackpool with its 8,000,000 visitors is, of course, unique, but the facts give an indication of what an immense business seaside entertainment has become. There may be more than a dozen shows at a time, employing five or six hundred artists and bringing up to £50,000 a week to the box-offices. Six or seven star artists will draw up to £5000 a week between them.

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To a lesser degree we find the same extraordinary development in other large resorts, where, almost unconsciously, a war has been fought between the attractions of the sea and beaches and the attractions of indoor entertainments. The old theory was that there was no need to provide expensive indoor entertainment, because nothing would induce holidaymakers to come out of the sun, and if it were wet and cold they would accept anything. Now it is known that, particularly in the resorts favoured by workers, the right attractions will draw full houses in any weather.

Dance-halls, winter-gardens, orchestras and entertainments of all kinds are now part of the big business of the seaside. The Tower and Winter Gardens at Blackpool are claimed to be the biggest 'entertainment units' anywhere in the world, not excluding the U.S.A. A circus seats 2000; one ballroom holds 4000 and another 5000; there are an opera-house with 3000 seats, a theatre seating 1500, and cinemas. In a recent year the Blackpool Tower company made a profit of nearly £400,000 and the Winter Gardens company a

profit of over £100,000. The circus, it should be said, is used in the off-season for classes in every kind of cooking and hotel management. They cost Blackpool £25,000 a year, but it is regarded as an investment, since well-run hotels and boarding-houses—there are about 6000 hotel-keepers and boarding-house proprietors in the town—are the greatest attraction of all.

Seaside resorts own golf-courses and race-courses, tennis courts and tramways. Devonshire Park, Eastbourne's world-famous tennis centre, where big tournaments are held, involves ratepayers in a loss of £6000 or £7000 a year. Every year the business gets bigger and bigger with various developments. For instance, in recent years it has been necessary to provide camping-grounds and caravan-parks—Brighton's camping-ground cost nearly £7500 to maintain, but actually made a profit.

How big is the big business of the resorts we can judge from the estimate that, the Coronation quite apart, no less than £400 million will be spent on holidays in Britain in 1953.

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## Country Bus

*Through lanes breast-high with milky parsley flower,  
Swaying the heads of pollen-laden grass  
As if a wind was bending the tasselled stems,  
Dawdling, halting, goes the country bus.*

*Here cheeks are red, and hands are gnarled, and speech  
Is sweet and dwells on the tongue, as an apple bitten  
Lingers in aromatic tang. They nurse  
Baskets of fruit, and flowers that loll like children*

*With heavy heads, cool petals. At each pause  
Doors open, curtains part; up warm brick paths,  
Bordered by pinks and beans dabbling green pods  
Like fingers among the cool mint and the thyme,*

*Come neighbours calling. All the country waits.  
Hands are waved. The day's news, field by field,  
Is passed and savoured—crops cut here, a hedge  
Untended; there, the crushed and quivering grass*

*That shows where the couples walked, locked in their love.  
Here gossip is kind, and scandal smiles and wears  
A flower-trimmed hat, and time itself will bear us  
Slow as our country bus through the dawdling years.*

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH.





## *Something in the Wind*

FRANK HEADLAND

'It is a thing which I hardly like to mention,' murmured Cesaro, sniffing the air with some distaste. 'There are some matters in which a man of delicacy must observe a little reticence, you would doubtless say. But you and I do not need to stand on ceremony, Enrico. Very well, then. You must know that there is something in your shop which, if I may presume on an old friendship, is a thought less fresh than it might be. Please do not think that I criticise; these things cannot be helped in the hot weather, and you yourself being constantly with the cause of offence can hardly be blamed for not noticing it. It is perhaps one of the cheeses?'

Enrico shrugged his shoulders and spread his fat fingers. 'What you say is impossible, Cesaro,' he protested. 'My cheeses have nothing but the aroma proper to their ripeness. Camembert, Gruyère, Gorgonzola, Parmesan—each has its peculiar characteristics, so much is well known. I will concede, however, that there are those whose ignorance of the subject might lead them into error, but such a mistake could not be made by persons of discrimination.' He applied himself to the symmetrical arrangement of a pyramid of red and green peppers with a dignity which suggested that, if anything in

the shop did offend, it was the customer.

But Cesaro was not to be quelled; he returned to the attack, quietly persistent. 'The affair certainly goes beyond the ordinary savour of a cheese, Enrico. If we must rule that out, then we have to consider the possibility that something has died. I see that I must clip the hedge with which I have surrounded our conversation and tell you quite frankly that there is a smell in your shop, old comrade.'

Enrico was deeply offended. 'If there is,' he said, 'and I do not deny that it is possible, then, at the risk of losing your custom, I must tell you that it has only made itself apparent since the door was last opened.'

It was now Cesaro's turn to feel insulted, and he was, indeed, halfway across the counter when the door opened again and Domenico Garganto stormed in. 'Here's a pretty thing!' he panted. 'You can smell it from my house, and beyond.'

'You see!' cried Cesaro triumphantly. 'Now will you believe me? Domenico, tell this imbecile of a cheese-huckster what is wrong with his nose.'

'It is more than ten metres long,' babbled Domenico. 'I hope I may never see anything uglier if I live to be a hundred.'

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'Now the Devil take both of you!' roared the harassed shopkeeper. 'Will you tell me what all this is about, or get out of my shop before I do things which I shall possibly repent but certainly not regret.'

'Why, here is no cause for heat,' said Domenico mildly. 'I thought that you must have heard. There is a great whale washed up on the beach, nearly opposite the Mayor's office. Cavallo asks us all to help in removing it immediately.'

'Why?' asked Cesaro, whose imagination was not of the strongest.

'Possibly you are under the impression that what you are breathing is attar of roses,' said Domenico. 'In that case, let me tell you that the castaway is in the later stages of decomposition.'

Cesaro muttered something which could have been interpreted as a wish to see Mayor Cavallo in a state even more advanced along the same road. Then he turned to Enrico. 'I owe you a thousand apologies,' he said simply. 'I will take half-a-kilo of your very excellent Camembert.'

'With pleasure,' smiled his mollified friend, showing his appreciation of the gesture by carefully removing the cutter which he usually weighed in with the cheese.

'Let us all go and look at this monster,' said Cesaro, when his purchase was wrapped. 'For myself, I do not believe it is a whale. I would say that such a beast does not enter our warm waters.'

'Then you would deny the Holy Scriptures,' observed Domenico in a shocked voice as they made their way towards the sandy path which led to the sea. 'Is it not written that the Lord prepared a great whale to swallow up Jonah? That was at Nineveh, which, as I need not remind you, is many hundreds of kilometres east of Moltefiore.'

'It was also many hundreds of years ago,' Cesaro argued. 'You will be telling me next that there are giants and dragons in these days.'

'I once saw a giant in a circus at Palermo,' retorted Domenico, in no way abashed. 'As for dragons, better ask Enrico. He has lived with one for many years.'

A joke made by a good customer is a good joke, even on so personal and painful a subject. Enrico joined in the laugh against himself. 'We will ask Father Antonio about whales,' he said. 'There he is over there, with Cavallo.'

THE priest and the Mayor were standing looking at the huge body which the capricious sea had abandoned on their doorstep. Domenico had in no way been guilty of exaggeration. It was certainly more than ten metres in length; neither had he overstated its condition.

'It is without doubt a whale,' said Father Antonio. 'It is unusual, but by no means unknown for them to appear in these seas. Actually, there was a whaling industry on the Basque coast until the 17th century, when, owing to their reckless slaughter, the whales became practically extinct.'

'How long has this one been here?' asked Domenico, shooting a triumphant glance at his doubting friend.

It appeared that the Mayor had discovered it late the previous evening, and had at first been considerably alarmed by it, as he was returning at the time from a more than usually convivial party. He was worried about its rapid deterioration. 'You see what a few hours of hot sun have already done. It must be removed without delay,' he said with authority.

'The sooner the better,' agreed Father Antonio.

The other three looked at each other uneasily. Then they all spoke together: 'I must be getting back to my shop.' 'I should not have left Violetta so long. She is due to foal to-day.' 'Maria is waiting for this cheese. I promised to hurry.'

They drifted away vaguely, to Cavallo's great annoyance. The position of first citizen of Moltefiore was not always an easy one. He could not, unfortunately, order anybody to do this thing, for which there was no precedent. A nuisance on somebody's land was one matter, but the beach belonged to nobody. Nevertheless, one would have thought that for their own sakes they would have been prepared to show some willingness, with the wind blowing off the sea and likely to stay in that quarter.

It was just the same with the other villagers as the day wore on. They drifted down to the beach eager to see the arrival, but quite uninterested in the problem of its disposal. The Mayor appealed to them on the grounds of public duty, neighbourliness, civic pride, hygiene, and every other virtue for which one looks in an enlightened community, but all to no avail; they shut their ears and their windows.

## SOMETHING IN THE WIND

EVENING found the male population of Moltefiore in Pomponi's trattoria, ready to talk but not to act. Cavallo interviewed them singly, consigned them to the Devil collectively, and sought out Quattrocchi, the village notary. 'It is not so easy to manage our people these days,' he lamented. 'The thing must be shifted or we shall have an epidemic on our hands. Twenty years ago there would have been no argument, the whole village would have rallied round.'

'They know too much now,' said Quattrocchi with professional feeling. 'We educate our children, and what happens? The boys form affected habits, such as washing the hands more than once a day, while the girls begin to talk about self-expression, which appears to mean becoming a typist in the municipal offices of Messina instead of bearing the children of some honest farmer. We teach them to write, and what do they write? Slogans on walls! Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, bah! What have they brought to the countries which have trumpeted them the loudest? I will tell you, my friend—liberty of morals, the equality of the chain-gang, and such fraternity as is born of misery!'

'What you say doubtless makes the most profound sense,' said the Mayor irritably. 'But we are getting many kilometres away from the point, which is the disposal of this unpleasant object which is afflicting us.'

'That is true,' admitted the notary. 'I did but seek to expose the futility of appealing to people's better natures. We must try another approach. It is necessary to apply the methods of psychology. You may leave it to me, though I do not know why I should give myself all this trouble.'

'Neither do I,' confessed the Mayor. 'Unless, of course, you are about to introduce the subject of the forage tender.'

'Nothing was further from my mind, but since you have mentioned it, Cavallo—'

'Say no more, Quattrocchi. Get rid of this whale, and the contract goes to your client, subject, of course, to our usual arrangement.'

THE notary hummed a little tune as he made his way to the trattoria, where, to judge by the babel which met him, a big evening was already under way. Seldom had Moltefiore enjoyed such an absorbing topic of conversation. Quattrocchi made his usual slight pause in the doorway, a theatrical touch

which he felt he owed to his position in the community. He was greeted civilly if without enthusiasm, and made his way to his favourite corner. Here he was content to sit for a time sipping his Marsala and waiting for an opportunity to twist the conversation to his own ends. The chance was not long in coming. One of his neighbours turned to him and asked him how, living as near to the beach as he did, he could possibly endure such an appalling stench.

'It is indeed a little overpowering,' he agreed. 'Yet it is a curious thing that the most delicate scents are frequently found to owe their pleasant appeal to parents of quite offensive origin. You may observe this miracle in your own gardens, where the corruption of the dung-heap is transmuted to the exquisite fragrance of, say, freesia. Even more mysterious are the creations of the world of commerce, where the most rare perfumes are distilled with the aid of such unlikely agents as civet, which is produced by the glands of a cat, and the valuable ambergris, which is frequently to be found in the intestines of such a whale as our visitor, being nothing but a morbid secretion.'

When Quattrocchi began this harangue he was hardly noticed above the considerable hubbub which was going on, yet such was the compelling quality of his voice that his closing sentence was heard in complete silence, as he intended it should be.

'What is this—how do you call it—ambergris?' asked Pomponi.

'It is a greyish substance lined with veins, something like marble. By the way, how is your wife's leg, Pomponi?'

'Thank you, sir, for asking. It isn't bad. This ambergris, you say it is valuable?'

'Assuredly. A large lump would be worth many thousand lire. This is an excellent Marsala, Pomponi. You may give me another glass.'

The chorus of conversation rose again, but it had taken on a muted quality, the restrained wagging of tongues whose owners were pre-occupied. Eating became a perfunctory business as spaghetti competed vainly with food for thought.

Presently a faraway look appeared on the ingenuous face of Vincenzo the wheelwright. He excused himself to those at his table and faded out of the door, muttering incoherent things about a spoke to be put in somebody's wheel before dark.

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A few moments later Battista the carter sprang to his feet and departed, with the remark that there was a matter about which he had forgotten to speak to Vincenzo.

The conversation among those remaining became more and more desultory. Then the Muscatti brothers conferred together and left precipitately.

'What have you been putting in your vino to-night, Pomponi?' asked Cesaro. 'It is unusual for Pepe and Carlo to leave before midnight.'

Domenico plucked at his sleeve and whispered something.

Cesaro stared back woodenly for a moment, then half-rose to his feet. 'Do you really think so?' he said.

'I am sure of it.'

'Then what are we waiting for? We have lost valuable time already!' He hustled to the door, dragging Domenico with him. Several others followed, uncertain as to what it was all about, but confident that men do not leave half-finished glasses for nothing. Pomponi raised his hands helplessly. Then a gleam of light came into his eyes, and he rushed out after his patrons. The notary passed a handkerchief across his face to hide the smile which would not be denied. He smiled again a few minutes later when he heard the rumbling of several carts.

After the best part of an hour, he himself strolled down to the sea. The water was placid, but the beach was a scene of tumult as the struggling swearing men of Moltefiore swarmed over the pathetic hulk in the hope of finding treasure. Ignorant of the whale's anatomy, they simply cut it up into pieces of a manageable size. It remained only for

Quattrocchi to cast into the melee the thought that the rotted flesh would make excellent fertiliser. Thus it was that, although no ambergris was found, the carts did not return empty.

'HOW did you do it?' asked the Mayor, meeting the notary at his door the next morning. 'I have just come back from the beach, and the thing might never have been there.'

'It was really quite easy,' said Quattrocchi with a careless shrug. 'Just a matter of understanding human nature. Was it not Napoleon who said that a nation is governed more easily through its vices than through its virtues? Whether you talk about incentives, or the profit motive, or give it any other fine-sounding name you like, greed is the mainspring of most mortal conduct; I did but wind it up. Er—that matter of the forage contract?'

'It is arranged,' said Cavallo, absent-mindedly fingering the gargoyle on his door-knocker. 'Of course, they might have found some ambergris,' he mused.

The notary gave him a pitying look. 'Do you suppose I had not already explored such a possibility? Really, Mayor, you underrate my intelligence! *A rivederci.*' He fussed importantly down the path, carefully stepping over a metal box which had been placed by the gate to wait for the carter.

A slow smile curled round Cavallo's mouth as he watched the notary leave. 'And you underrate mine, my so clever friend,' he murmured, taking the gargoyle into his confidence. 'What a pity you did not look a day earlier, Quattrocchi!'

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## One Fine Morning

*One fine morning you will find  
All your troubles left behind.  
One fine morning you will see  
What kind of man you want to be.  
One fine morning you'll be sure  
That your courage can endure.  
One fine morning you will wake  
And know the road you ought to take.  
Fortune's gate has opened wide,  
Grasp your reins, and ride, man, ride!*

VIVIAN HENDERSON.



# London of Yesterday

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F. G. LEVIEN

THE stories which my father used to tell me of the London of his day (1825-1905) and my own recollections as an octogenarian bear little resemblance to what we know and see now. My grandfather (1791-1866) lived in Woburn Square, which was then a good-class residential district, his house being close to that of Charles Dickens, who was a frequent visitor. His friends used to shoot snipe on Charing Cross marshes.

When my grandfather left London to live in the country, at Putney, the only way in which my father could get to Shrewsbury Free Grammar School was by road-coach from the Angel at Islington. The journey, taking two days and nights, had to be made in all sorts of weather, in those days when winters were harder and summers hotter than is usually the case now. At school the boys had to wash in iron basins in the open air, which meant breaking the ice in winter-time. Their weekly bath was under the pump. When that school, where Sir Philip Sidney was educated, became one of the recognised public-schools a move was made in 1882 to the present site. Football was played, and in my father's day hacking, that is kicking below the knees, was within the rules.

When my father left school, he and his friends used to ride to work in the City, that being practically the only means of getting there. They made up a party as a protection against the footpads who frequented the market-gardens which extended almost up to Berkeley Street. They stabled their horses on a village-green, close by Shakespeare's Theatre, below where Southwark Bridge now stands.

My father became a good amateur boxer. He used to say: 'If I had half-a-crown in my pocket and could walk to the Essex marshes to see a prize-fight, I thought I was a king!' As an oarsman and coxswain, he won many

cups and prizes on the Thames from London to Henley. He was a frequent contributor to the columns of *The Field* some hundred years ago, as an authority on the course over which the 'Varsity boat-race is rowed, before the lock at Richmond was completed in 1894, thereby making a big difference in the run of the tide.

As a cricketer, he played in that now-celebrated match in which over-arm bowling first replaced under-arm. He was one of the XXII of Banbury who played at that place against a second-eleven of England in June of the Great Exhibition year of 1851, such well-known players taking part as Fuller Pilch and W. Caffyn. I have the J. & F. Lillywhite card before me now, as well as contemporary newspaper accounts. Banbury won the match, which comprised two innings for each side, with nine wickets in hand. This was chiefly through their having two professionals on their side—Burrin and Bickley, who took all the opposing wickets except three.

There were few evening amusements for young men in London before the advent of music-halls, but a precursor of them was Evans's Music and Supper Rooms in Covent Garden, admission 1s., but private boxes cost 10s. 6d., 21s., or 31s. 6d., and bed and breakfast 7s. 6d. There is a picture on the Evans's programme which I have, issued in the 1850's, showing long tables at which the diners are sitting, with a stage at the far end of the hall. Every evening at 8 p.m. there were sung 'Songs, Glees, Ballads, Madrigals, and Choruses,' which were typically English patriotic songs, such as 'Hearts of Oak,' 'The Brave Old Téméraire.'

WHEN I first knew London as a young man in the early 1880's it was the custom for those who had just left college to

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belong to the Isthmian Club, that being the only club in the West End where a minor could be a member. Its premises were at Walsingham House, overlooking that part of the Green Park where the Ritz Hotel now stands. The club moved to 105 Piccadilly and occupied the premises which were formerly the Pulteney Hotel, and later the private house of Sir Julian Goldsmid, the art-collector. When the Isthmian moved again, to 4 Grafton Street, their Piccadilly premises became the Hôtel Splendide. The club lawn at Phyllis Court was a popular rendezvous at Henley Regatta. At most clubs one could get a first-class luncheon for 1s. 6d. and a late dinner for 2s. 6d.

In order to become a member of the Conservative Club in St James's Street, or of other similar clubs, it was necessary to have one's name put down almost as soon as one was born. The entrance-fee to the Conservative was one hundred guineas and the annual subscription fifteen guineas. This club had the reputedly best cellar of wines in London, after that of Mr Nichols, the well-known proprietor of the Café Royal of those days.

Among the familiar sights of the London streets were the many splendidly-horsed road-coaches which started from Hatchett's in Piccadilly, or from the Grand and other hotels in Northumberland Avenue, for their daily return trips to Brighton and other places. The meet of the Four-in-Hand Club at the Powder Magazine in Hyde Park was another fine spectacle.

Those who rode before breakfast on the tan track, called Rotten Row, in Hyde Park, would see the streets being cleaned by means of a horse-drawn water-cart, which scattered a spray of water through a perforated semi-circular pipe, fixed low down at the rear, and with a mechanism for flushing the gutters, which could be released by the driver; either outflow could be stopped at will. This cleansing was very necessary when the streets were thronged with horse-drawn vehicles such as caused blocks lasting even longer than now, especially in Piccadilly and Bond Street.

The street surface consisted of wooden setts, about the size of a brick, and they became much fouled. After Goodwood races, society left Mayfair *en masse* and the streets were taken up so that repairs could be effected to the quickly worn-out wood blocks.

Because of the sea of liquid mud after rain, it was a much-sought-after occupation to sweep the intersections on main roads where foot-passengers crossed over side-turnings. Most people gave the crossing-sweeper a copper or so, but the sweepers became very expert at 'inadvertently' sweeping a wave of mud over the boots of those who failed to do so.

Black boots were invariably worn, either laced or with buttons down the sides, and for a long period spats were fashionable. One seldom saw anyone wearing shoes, and black boots were worn always in London and generally in the country also. A few old men still wore wellingtons under their trousers. These were soft leather black boots, coming to just below the knee, like the jack-boot used for riding. For some time there was a vogue for elastic-sided boots, known as 'Jemimas.' Boot-blacks plied their trade at quiet street-corners and at all railway-stations; at two stations they still can be seen. They were boys, wearing red jackets, who had a small box on which one rested one's foot, and they gave boots a wonderful polish even when wet, using Day & Martin's blacking, which was about the only kind available for general use.

Red jackets were worn also in the London streets by boys who carried on their very necessary trade of sweeping up horse-droppings with their small brushes and half-covered pans, the contents of which were emptied into open-topped bins on the edge of the pavement. These bins became full to the top and were not pleasant on a hot summer's day. The boys were too quick-witted to be run over while dodging about amongst the heavy traffic and I never saw one injured.

THE surfaces of London streets turned very slippery when wet, or when just drying, causing horses to fall about, but not so much as one would have expected, as the animals became used to looking after themselves in all sorts of conditions. Hansom-cab horses were most often down, and this usually meant a broken top-hat, for the hirer of the cab, against the edge of the glass screen when it was in the up position. These screens could be let down by the driver by means of a strap at the request of the occupant, who pushed up a small trap-door above his head for

## LONDON OF YESTERDAY

purposes of communication. We seldom used the screen on wet days, but preferred to put up an umbrella, for which there was just room, and thus one could avoid broken glass.

No ladies ever used hansom-cabs unless they were accompanied by a man, nor would they walk in the streets or parks alone. If by themselves, they used one of the four-wheeled cabs known as growlers, driven by old men and with old broken-down horses. There was dirty straw on the floors and the growlers had an unmistakable effluvium of their own.

Starting a heavily-loaded vehicle was a great effort for those fine horses which used to draw brewers' drays, coal-carts, or, more especially, the always full buses. From continually stopping and restarting, the bus horses became very clever at digging the toes of their hind-feet into the wooden setts and leaning against the pole and each other for support at each fresh start.

Buses were of the knife-board type, open at the top—as were the earlier motor-buses. We sat back to back on slatted seats, and in wet weather there were heavy, black macintosh covers, cloth-lined and almost as stiff as a board, which one could put over one's knees. The drivers wore several thick overcoats, with rugs over their knees. This they did in winter or summer, saying that it kept out the cold or the heat according to the season.

All drivers of public vehicles excelled in humour and ready wit, and one seldom heard an angry exchange of words, biting sarcasm coming more easily to their tongues. The staid, sedate private coachmen, in their cockaded top-hats, with a footman similarly attired by their side on the box-seat, as it was called, never spoke unless addressed by their master or mistress through a speaking-tube from the inside seats of their broughams, victorias, or landaus.

**T**HERE were very few fixed stands for the sale of newspapers, such as for evening editions of the pale-pink-coloured *Globe* or the pale-green *Pall Mall Gazette*. Boys used to run about the streets shouting out some particular bit of news which their vivid, Cockney imaginations made to appear startling. Their high-pitched raucous cry of 'All the winners! Piper!' had to be known to be recognised, and it became a considerable nuisance.

Piccadilly and Oxford Street were the venue of itinerant sellers of mechanical toys, most ingeniously made and seldom costing more than 6d. When a policeman was coming, the vendors of these popular toys would suddenly pick up the one they were demonstrating and mysteriously vanish among the crowd or round a corner, having been 'given the office' by means of a code of their own; but the guardian of the law was not really interested in stopping this innocent, although illegal, trade and he would walk straight on, whereupon business would be resumed.

A few old men had licences to sell goods publicly—as now—such as matches, from a tray slung round their necks. There was one who, for some unaccountable reason, would draw attention to his wares by an incessantly repeated murmur of 'And the bootlaces!'

Professional beggars had their self-appointed and jealously guarded pitches. It was a thriving industry, and it was said that there was a special school for the further exploitation of damaged or deformed limbs, although it was obvious that many were quite genuinely incapacitated.

Pickpockets were by no means unusual when no imitation jewellery was worn by the leisurely denizens of Mayfair. Nearly all men wore an Albert chain across the front of their waistcoats, attached to which at each end, and carried in the two lower pockets, were a watch and a round covered sovereign-case. All these were made of gold. The sovereign-case was devised to hold five sovereigns, which were pressed upwards by a spring. Good silk handkerchiefs and jewelled tiepins were also well worth purloining, but the latter were generally protected by a screwed-on fitment at the pointed end. Women were seldom the victims of street thieving, as they had few and inaccessible pockets, the small bag they carried being held inside a muff.

It was the custom for men to wear flowers, violets or a gardenia, in the buttonholes of tightly-fitting frockcoats, or the more unusual tailcoat of the period. Flower-girls, sometimes euphemistically so called, stood at street-corners, and those 'girls' of all ages who sat round the statue of Eros at Piccadilly Circus were well known to the male inhabitants of the West End, many of whom bought their flowers from them. These buttonholes usually had their stalks wrapped in silver-paper. A small glass holder with

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water in it was often worn at the back of lapels to keep the flowers fresh.

**CIGARETTES** were hardly known, and it would have been anathema to smoke a pipe in the streets of London. Only cigars were smoked—always Havanas. It was considered bad form to carry a parcel. Everything was bought on credit and delivered to the house.

Nobody was allowed to occupy the stalls in a theatre unless in evening clothes. The women in beautiful dresses, wearing tiaras and bedecked with jewellery, made a most impressive sight in the days when imitation gems were unheard of as suitable wear. In the Empire Music Hall Promenade dress clothes were also obligatory and young men forgathered there almost nightly, after dining at their clubs, to walk about among the high-class 'ladies,' who were so much in evidence, but always well-behaved and never speaking to strangers unless spoken to. Those who strolled about there seldom looked at the show itself except cursorily, good as it invariably was, with its ballet, and other things. They went there to meet their hunting friends and others and they made a club of this ever-popular and crowded place where cocktails could be bought at one of the few such bars in London. There was seldom any need for the services of the big, hefty chuckers-out in their showy and distinctive uniforms. The entrance-fee to the Promenade was 10s.

The best-known of the one or two night-clubs was the Gardenia, entrance to which was by membership or with the written authority of a member. There one danced the old waltzes, polkas, and the rest, mostly with the same type of young women whom one saw at the Empire, and they were a well-behaved crowd as a rule. The Covent Garden Ball was a notable and hectic annual affair.

Street-lighting was by gas until—I believe in the late 1880's—electric-bulbs were introduced with their flickering blue light. Before electric-lighting was perfected there were very few illuminated signs and advertisements.

Fogs of the pea-soup variety, called 'London particulars,' were most unpleasantly frequent. It was usual for all forms of traffic to get completely lost and bewildered in thoroughfares which the drivers knew quite well. Linkboys were much in evidence carrying a flaming rag, soaked in paraffin, at the end of an iron holder and walking in front of the traffic as a guide.

Many of the stately old houses in the West End had their iron torch-holders or links hanging on the top of the steps at each side of front-doors, or at the entrance at ground-level to the steps leading down to the almost universal basements, or kitchen premises. There were also iron rings, conveniently attached to the railings surrounding these basements, to which errand-boys tied their horses or ponies while delivering goods from the big wicker-baskets which they carried. There are a few link-holders still surviving in some of the old squares in London and some rings to be found in country districts, but the present generation seems to be unaware of their former use.

The fumes on the old Underground Railway, with its Outer and Inner Circle, had to be experienced to be believed. The thick, sulphurous blanket of yellow fog, which was at its worst round about Gower Street station, made one's eyes water and smart as though being subjected to tear-gas.

Having meals outside one's own house, except occasionally in well-known hotels, was hardly possible when there were none of the now popular restaurants. Probably the A.B.C. in Throgmorton Street in the City was one of the first, and we asked each other what 'Aerated Bread' could mean and if that was all one could get there. There were no generally accepted legal hours for the closing of shops and in consequence there was no evening rush, especially as there were in those days no girls employed in shops and offices.

There certainly has been a phenomenal change in the way of life of many now living who remember the old appearance and customs of the London streets at the latter end of last century.





## Ordeal of Hate

Captain FRANK H. SHAW

GOING up for the second mate's examination was quite an ordeal in itself; it would have been if subjected to a quiz by a kindly, tolerant examiner. But the cold, sea-blue eyes staring at me were definitely hostile, I thought. Talk in the Board of Trade ante-room prior to the doors of the main apartment being thrown open had been of the desire of the examining body to refuse certificates to as many candidates as possible.

There was a slump in the shipping world. The officer-ranks were overcrowded; men with master's tickets were gratefully signing on before the mast, thankful to find employment even at the meagre wage offered—a maximum of four pounds per month. The docks were thick with unemployed—highly-qualified men trudging dolefully from ship to ship in hope of securing work to keep them from the workhouse. Fifty years ago and more there was no friendly dole, no Shipping Pool.

None the less I'd decided to undergo the test. Young ambition was a stern taskmaster. I had the requisite sea-time—four years at sea outside the limits of the Elbe and Brest, which qualified me to try for a foreign-going second mate's certificate, and so fit myself as a watch-keeping officer. I wasn't yet twenty-one, but I'd been round the world in a windship four

times, being dismasted once off Cape Horn, and so having acquired, I thought, practical experience enough to make the stoniest-hearted examiner satisfied that I knew the ropes from the hawser to the after-bell lanyard.

I was hoping to qualify as second mate in sail. I had barely sufficient sea-time; actually the accumulation was exactly four years to the day—and to secure it I'd had to make a voyage as boatswain in a Glasgow ship bound for the Mediterranean. My apprenticeship articles had been cancelled at my own request—not without difficulty—whilst still a few weeks short of the ordained period. The *Dovenby's* owners wanted me to complete the indentures on the customary terms—to commence a forthcoming voyage as apprentice, and be signed on as able seaman the day the articles expired. The wage was to be that prevailing at the port of departure at the time of sailing—three pounds per month. But that meant at least a year wasted, in my estimation. Why function as an underpaid A.B. for a complete voyage, when, freed from the irk of the apprenticeship, I might blossom forth as a real ship's officer?

The presiding examiner—himself a highly-qualified extra master mariner—examined my papers and references when I passed them up. 'Your sea-time is insufficient!' he blared, and

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threw the papers at me. 'Come again when you've got it.'

My knees were knocking together; I scented total failure; but I summoned up courage enough to retort: 'If you examine the discharges properly you'll see I'm qualified to take the examination.' He snarled as if anxious to order me a keelhauling. The story was that in his seagoing days he'd been a holy terror—a real Western Ocean hard-case roughneck. Well, my experience was that a bully quailed if outfaced.

'Pick those papers up and let me see them again,' he brayed.

Thinking my fast-beating heart would suffocate me, I said: 'Pick them up yourself; you threw them down!' And he did it! He was purple with emotion; I saw his hands trembling, and decided it was just another case of attempted bullying, to which I'd been accustomed in my apprenticeship.

'You have exactly the required service,' he agreed after a further study of the documents. 'Not a day more!' Well, extra days weren't asked for. I said nothing; maybe I showed triumph, for his glare should have melted an armour-plate. I don't think such hectoring tactics were fair. True, they were prevalent; and this examiner was world-notorious for his savagery. 'Take the navigation exam,' he rasped, in true windship style.

**I** JOINED the collection of humanity in the body of the big room. None seemed particularly sanguine of success. My next neighbour admitted he had tried the tests seventeen times, meeting failure on each occasion. And yet this veteran was a first-class seaman, as he later proved in terrible circumstances: it was simply that he panicked at the written trial. On this occasion he also failed, and, despairing, decided to try another port for his next attempt. He went to Cardiff, and found the Liverpool tyrant functioning there as deputy to a holiday-making examiner. He failed again!

Primed as I was with a fortnight's intensive cramming at a nautical school, I found the written exam none too difficult. It opened with dictation, from that day's *Times*. I'd assumed it would, and had carefully coned such words as 'manœuvres' and 'idiosyncrasies,' both of which showed up in the news. Both words cropped up, and my fellow-sufferers

grinned at me as a know-all, for I'd advised them that something similar might occur.

The navigational problems were simple—working out a dead-reckoning; computing a meridian altitude of sun and star; fudging a compass azimuth; the correct application of deviation and variation to a compass course and bearing. Just such modest navigation as a watchkeeping second mate might be required to use, though normally such a dog's body wasn't expected to share the close secrets of the sacred afterguard.

Candidate after candidate handed in his completed papers. In at least seventy-five per cent of cases it was: 'Failed. Come back in a week'—or a month, even three months. No second chance that day! But failure in navigation wasn't fatal—another week at school, say; a breathing-space for mugging up the niggling details of a would-be officer's craft. With the practical examination in seamanship it was different. Failure there meant an order to resume sea-life for six months or so, to get better acquainted with the trade. The lucky few were instructed to await their turn before the seamanship scrutineer. I handed up my papers in fear and trembling, longing for opportunity for a revision. Too late, however; the die was cast.

My previous inquisitor took the papers as if they were so much rotted offal. But he read them with increasing absorption. I'd drawn marginal sketches to illustrate certain problems, out of sheer young vanity, I suppose, since such art was not demanded. He muttered: 'You seem to have got the hang of things.' My chilled spirits rose. I had studied very hard and intensively during my few days ashore. I'd paid a hardly-earned seven or eight guineas to enrol in what was admitted to be the best sea-school in the Mersey port. An inborn flair for mathematics had made such studies pleasurable. I owned a curious, analytical mind which wasn't content with the findings of the savants, but had to discover things for itself.

'Take your turn for seamanship,' growled Cerberus, who guarded the gate of the ultimate tyranny. So far so good, even if cold hate lay behind those frosty basilisk eyes and every hair of a neat torpedo-beard bristled with antagonism.

**I** ASKED a neighbour: 'Who's taking seamanship to-day?'

## ORDEAL OF HATE

'Captain M—, the rotten son of a sea-cook!' he grumbled. Oh, hell; the worst of the lot; a man who boasted that his role was to fail candidates, not to pass them! A fiery, unfair arbiter, who had more than once been reported to higher authority for his intransigence. And these pundits, ex-masters of almost slave-ships in the past, put their heads together, we youngsters believed, to compare notes on such as braved their wrath! My fate was sealed if Number One examiner went into a huddle with Number Two. The lunch interval came as I still sweated blood. The food bought at a near-by cookshop was tasteless as apples of Sodom.

Back then to the purgatory of waiting—with no textbooks for a final rub-up permitted. Fellow-sufferers were too distraught to talk. The big snag, everyone feared, would be Rule of the Road—the high seas code of priority and progression where ships were concerned. If you advised any sort of action in this test, you were at once required to state the article justifying it—and my memory, normally infallible, was like a colander. Couldn't remember a single damned thing—even with the jingling of the rhymes to help:

*If all three lights I see ahead,  
I port my helm and show my red.*

*If to my starboard red appear,  
It is my duty to keep clear.  
But if upon my port is seen  
A steamer's starboard light of green,  
I've nothing then to do but see  
That green to port keeps clear of me!*

*In danger with no room to turn,  
I ease her, stop her, go astern.*

All glib and pat as the Apostles' Creed in seldom-visited church—but how to apply the theories to practical dilemmas? There'd be models on the examiner's table, of ships and lights, and he'd group them to his own bizarre fancy and leave you to extricate the theoretical ship on which he'd placed you from the bewildering maze—and do it instantly. 'No time to think; you've got to act to avoid disaster!'

Man after man was summoned to the inner sanctuary. We never saw them again, successful or ignominious failures. They were let out by a side door, presumably so that they shouldn't tell the untried what type of question was being asked.

One thing, I reflected, near worn-out by

waiting: If my turn didn't come that day I'd have another evening to read up the knotty details. There was such a lot to be remembered. No idea was conveyed as to the subjects likely to be dealt with; behind that closed door was a mysterious holy of holies, where the most fantastic quiz proceeded.

I heard my own name called as if it belonged to someone else. A man in a lathering dream, I stumbled to the door and knocked, as required.

'Come in,' roared a Cape Horn voice. I obeyed, and with the door in my hand heard a fierce: 'All aback for'ard!'

Ah, glory be, I remembered. 'Helm amidships, box her off with the foreyards,' I said breathlessly.

'Sit down,' I was told. The senior examiner's face was like Ailsa Craig—at least as forbidding and rugged, hewn out of rock of the most uncompromising quality. That man had never smiled in his life; and he detested embryo second mates as he probably detested rats aboard the ships of his earlier command.

I was failed in advance, I decided. The gnarled hands tossed the ship models about the table as if they were dice to decide my fate. 'Rule of the Road,' he growled. 'You're in a steamer, you see a red light right under your starboard bow. Action?'

I had that one.

*If to my starboard red appear,  
It is my duty to keep clear.*

I answered as snappily as I could: 'Keep clear, sir.'

'How?'

'Port your helm and go under his stern, sir.'

'You haven't room for that. Go on.'

Bless my memory! 'Stop her, sir, and watch what he does.' That was provided for in the memory-helping jingle.

'Quote the appropriate article,' Never a glimmer of hope in that saturnine face, only sheer enmity at my daring to give a satisfactory answer.

'In a sailing-ship, you see a red light to starboard. Action?'

'Stand on, sir, if there's a white light on top.' A windship held on against everything except a similar vessel. Only a disappointed grunt told me I was successful.

'When does a sailing-ship give way to a steamer?'

'When overtaking, sir.'

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'You see a white light dead ahead. Show your action.' I had a model between my uncertain fingers.

'Proceed with caution until its character is ascertained.'

'What might it be?'

'A ship's overtaking light. A boat not requiring red and green sidelights. A ship burning a flare for a pilot.'

'Wind's south-west. You see the lights of a herring-drifter on your port bow. Action?'

That required quick thinking. A drifter would set to the north-east with a sou'westerly wind. Her three miles of nets would be streamed to leeward. Easy! My answer checked his: 'You've failed!'

'You're pretty glib, young feller!'

MY head ached, I reeled in a fog of self-doubt. But so far I'd stayed the course. The dogged animosity was still opposed to me. Why did he detest me so much? I only wanted to qualify as an efficient ship's officer—nothing criminal in that! Everyone knew that Captain M—had a sadistic mind, but why pick on me for a target for his corroded spleen? He had risen from the fo'c'sle; he disliked men of education, that was the simple truth. The story was that, appointed to command a windship, he had sneered at the inscription 'Midshipmen' over the apprentices' quarters and had ordered it to be replaced with a democratic 'Boys.'

He swept the models aside with a disgusted gesture. 'Let's see if you know anything about a ship, then.'

That was a gruelling, if you like! He set me aboard an imaginary sailing-vessel, dismasted off the Horn, with her cargo shifted and her rudder broken. I was required to right her, rig a jury rudder, and so far refit the sheer hulk as to make her seaworthy enough to be navigated to a port of refuge.

I started by rigging a sea-anchor from loose spars and canvas, with a stream-anchor as ballast. He demanded details. I remembered in time the need to attach a canvas, oil-filled bag to the sea-anchor, so that the thin trickle of oil would smalm the crippling seas.

'Proceed,' he growled portentously. I went on, remembering detail by detail—though he wasn't to know. I rigged the spare spars as sheer-legs, and reared them to serve as a crane by which other spars could be erected to serve as masts. I sent the crew below to trim cargo,

and so bring the ship upright to an even keel. By now I was past caring. All I wanted to make me happy was to escape from that room of torment; it didn't matter if I failed. Six months at sea was far preferable to a continuance of purgatory. He made a close analysis of every detail of reconstruction, even to the type of knots required. Rigging the lifted spars gave him diabolical delight. But I noticed as the fog cleared that he was sweating, too. In his fanatical desire to fail me he had expended all his own knowledge and was drained to the dregs! 'Well, I've tried my best to throw you out,' he said. 'You seem to have attended a good nautical school.'

'I was in a ship in exactly similar circumstances,' I explained. 'We saved her. They didn't say anything at school.'

HAD I passed? I couldn't estimate from glances at that teak-hard countenance.

'Keeping a watch at sea is a great responsibility,' he said. 'A lot of you young cubs think you've only to buy a few brass buttons to qualify as officers. Brassbounders!' His scowling malevolence was enough to daunt the fiercest roughneck who ever hauled on a topsail halliard.

I held my breath. This terrible autocrat had supreme control of my young destinies for the next six months at least. There was a rumour going the rounds of the waterfronts that if you went to Cardiff and stood the B.O.T. examiner a dinner he'd pass you flying! Why hadn't I taken the easy course!

'Let's see what you know about the compass and its deviations,' he said, and the inquisition proceeded. Now, this was hardly fair: such intricate details came into the examination for first mate, not for second. Yet I dared not protest that he was taxing me beyond my capability. So easy for him to recapitulate the seamanship work and find flaws. It seemed grossly unjust that one man—and such a man—should have such power. There'd been enough to mug up without troubling about such highbrow subjects. But I answered his quick-fire questions to the best of my ability. You'd have thought I was qualifying as first-class navigator according to the fantastically high standards of the Royal Navy. What should an ex-apprentice of exactly four years' service know of induced as compared to natural magnetism? How did I



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know that the static magnetism in a steel ship's hull depended on the angle her keel lay to the North Pole during her building, and the amount of hammer-work put into her? How was I to know the difference between vertical magnetism and horizontal, as exemplified by upright stanchions and horizontal beams? What little I knew of a compass consisted of taking an amplitude at sunrise or sunset when the orb of day was touching the horizon, and its bearing could be corrected by nautical tables.

But I noticed he was eyeing the book of forms which contained the precious 'blue paper' which, signed and delivered, entitled a man to receive the linen-backed certificate of competency. My jaded spirits rose. He reached for the book and snapped it open, grabbed a pen. 'You've passed,' he growled. 'And—and I congratulate you on doing it. I didn't intend you to—too cocksure! Here you are, then!' He filled in the invaluable form and tossed it across his table. No need to tell me what to do with it. Would he shake hands? I felt his touch would scorch me. He made no offer. So I took the paper and left him, to deal with some other shivering martyr whom I passed in my exit. This one was summarily failed, and remitted to six months' extra sea-time.

I felt like turning cart-wheels in the stony corridor. I grinned back at the grinning porter who eyed my blue paper anticipatorily; I gave him one of my few remaining half-crowns to drink the health of a full-fledged officer in the British mercantile marine.

'What was he like?' asked candidates still awaiting the ordeal.

'Not so bad,' said I cheerfully.

I went to the cookshop where I had previously masticated dried coconut fibre mixed

with ashes, and I wolfed down such a meal as left me gasping. It tasted good. Who'd be a King of England?

WITH exactly one year's service as second mate of a sailing-ship to my credit, I presented myself again at that examination-room, this time a candidate for full mate's honours. The written examination was easy.

'Go in for seamanship,' said the presiding officer. I knocked on a well-remembered door.

'Come in,' sounded a familiar roar. I steeled myself. Same old ordeal!

'She's all aback for'ard,' said Captain M—harshly. I gave him the answer.

'You again?' he gulped, recognising me. 'What do you want this time?'

'Up for first mate, sir,' I replied.

'Sit down. I asked you everything I knew last time. You're passed,' he grinned. Quite a decent, lovable old dastard, I decided. As he scribbled another blue paper in my favour he asked: 'Like to go with Such and Such a line? They're looking for competent youngsters. I'll give you a recommendation if you feel that way.'

I said I hoped to gain all the further certificates in sail, but thanked him nicely for offered mediation.

'Maybe you're right,' he admitted. 'But by the time you get your master's ticket there won't be a windjammer afloat. Here you are.' With the blue paper he offered me his hand—and the shake was distinctly friendly.

'Care to join me in a drink, sir?' I asked, greatly daring.

'Listen,' he said, 'meet me at the Adelphi at six-thirty and I'll buy you as good a dinner as Liverpool can provide.'

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## A Summer Song

*Yestreen, by countless hearts adored,  
The daffodils uprose to sing,  
And thus, sun-blest, in love outpoured  
Their songs of spring.*

*And now, when summer fills the land,  
The golden-throated minstrels throng,  
And flood the earth, at heaven's command,  
With summer song.*

*But soon in calm serene and deep  
The singers and their songs shall rest,  
Hushed by autumnal love to sleep  
On Nature's breast.*

*Grieve not, O heart, though from our sight  
The lovely things of earth are borne,  
But know from winter's darksome night  
Shall break the morn!*

GILBERT RAE.

# Some Royal Art Collectors

GEORGE TREMAINE

CONNOISSEURSHIP is not to be confused with mere patronage or possession. It implies knowledge, taste, individual judgment. Most English kings have been in possession of considerable art treasure by the very force of inheritance. Many of them have been art patrons. Only a few, however, are entitled to be ranked as connoisseurs in the true sense of the word. Yet it is largely to the efforts of this select few that the treasures of such royal homes as Windsor and Hampton Court are world-renowned, and that our present Queen can lay claim, among other distinctions, to the ownership of a private art collection second to none in Europe.

WAS Henry VIII an art connoisseur? There is nothing to indicate his right to such a title, although it would not have been prudent for any of his contemporaries who valued their heads to have hinted otherwise. A gentleman who would order the arrest of his own wife because she differed from him on a point of theology, which actually happened to Catherine Parr, was not likely to tolerate heresy in a courtier.

That Henry was an ardent 'collector' the monasteries learned only too well, but it was with an eye on cash values rather than on artistic beauty. That he was a munificent patron of art, and, as such, indirectly benefited his country, his regard for Holbein testifies. But his personal tastes were showy and meretricious, and for Henry, as for Napoleon, art was just a form of propaganda to exalt his own glory and magnificence.

Posterity has little to show for this monarch's wholesale plunderings of rich abbeys and priories. Ill-luck seems to have dogged the treasure-trove. Some seven hundred pictures, many of them masterpieces which could never be replaced, and tapestries

beyond price, were destroyed in a few hours in the fire which consumed the old Palace of Whitehall in 1607.

Even the famous Holbein portraits at Windsor and Hampton Court were lost to the Crown for some while and had to be repurchased. The art interests of Henry's daughters were negligible. Mary left such fancies to her Spanish consort, while Elizabeth's taste ran to personal jewellery, and wigs, of which she possessed close on a hundred.

THE first place among royal art connoisseurs undoubtedly belongs to Charles I, in whom an unerring judgment went hand in hand with immense zest and a real sense of values. It was Charles who brought Van Dyck to England, just as, earlier, Henry had brought Holbein, but, whereas the relations of Henry with his court painter were strictly those of master and man, Charles loved to watch the progress of the work and would spend hours in Van Dyck's studio.

Charles's master stroke was the purchase of the world-famous Gonzaga collection from the Duke of Mantua, for which he is reported to have paid a sum equal to-day to three-quarters of a million. The King's courtiers stood aghast at the amounts which changed hands for art purchases, but Charles knew better than they that he was buying for posterity, and the value of his acquisitions, were they intact at the present day, would run into millions of pounds.

Alas! The dispersal of that peerless collection by the Commonwealth remains one of the greatest tragedies of the art world, at least so far as concerns our own country. Foreign agents cashed in with astute promptitude, and many a European gallery to-day has reason to bless the name of the ill-fated Stuart. That

## SOME ROYAL ART COLLECTORS

priceless gems of art should be flung away for a mere trifle is in itself bad enough, but the wanton destruction of such gems through sheer blind fanaticism is something which will not bear thinking about.

The connoisseurship of his son, Charles II, is difficult to assess. This monarch was indisputably a man of good taste, at least in art matters, and it stands to his credit that he endeavoured, where possible, to regain possession of some of the lost treasure. He was the patron of Lely and Kneller, and lent his support to the establishment of the Mortlake factory which, while it lasted, did much to put English tapestry on the map.

On the other hand, the famous Raphael Cartoons were almost lost to this country through Charles, who had already concluded a deal with France when the urgent entreaties of Lord Danby induced him, reluctantly, to withdraw his sanction. The truth is, one imagines, that the second Charles inherited his father's excellence of taste, without the latter's judgment and keenness, and that his natural indolence, added to an eternal need of ready money, often caused him to go contrary to his artistic conscience.

**WILLIAM III** was the surprise-packet among royal connoisseurs. He was not credited with possessing any particular taste, especially in Jacobite circles, where his Dutch predilections were a source of much amusement. Yet his enemies had to eat their words. It was William who brought to this country the celebrated architect and designer, Daniel Marot, a craftsman of supreme skill and versatility, whose contribution to English art has never been justly estimated.

The young Marot, a victim of Huguenot persecution, had, before his flight to Holland, worked in the studio of the renowned André Charles Boulle in Paris, the master who gave his name to the elegant brass and tortoiseshell inlay known as 'Boulle' or 'Buhl' work. Marot's great achievement lay in combining the best features of the French and Dutch styles, pruning the former of its rococo extravagances and relieving the latter of its burgomaster ponderousness.

It is to this capable Huguenot, more than to any other man, that we owe the creation of the style known as Queen Anne. William made him Master of the Works at Hampton Court, where his many-sided genius was given

full play and where his work may best be studied. Marot's versatility ranged from silver-plate to chandeliers, and from mirror-frames to clocks and chimney-pieces. He also assisted in laying out the gardens at Hampton Court.

Among the art treasures which William brought over from Holland was a set of four Chinese vases decorated on a black ground with the five colours of the Kang Hsi period, an outstanding possession even among the Imperial treasures of China. The late Sir Joseph Duveen, who acquired these vases, and estimated their value at £100,000, declared that William in his various purchases revealed 'personally good art taste.'

Mary, his Queen, whose notorious passion for 'blue and white' pottery provided society with an inexhaustible fund of humour, also left it to posterity to confound her critics. The royal collection to-day is considerably enriched by many exquisite pieces of Chinese and Delft which this enthusiastic lady accumulated.

**THE** first two Hanoverian monarchs cared little for art, and understood still less. The historic remark of the second George when confronted with a painting by Hogarth, 'I hate both bainting and boetry,' was at least honest. George III, however, although his taste was negligible, proved a generous patron of the arts, which was all the more surprising in view of his personal meanness. He lent his support to the founding of the Royal Academy, visited and bought porcelain from Worcester and other factories, purchased a fine series of Canalettos from the British Consul at Venice, and gave various commissions to the leading English portrait-painters, including such masters as Reynolds, Gainsborough, Hoppner, and Benjamin West.

The Prince Regent, afterwards George IV, was the last great figure in the long procession of royal collectors, and upon him the mantle of Charles I may be said to have fallen. Strangely enough, although his taste in dress was tawdry, this defect did not enter into the Regent's artistic judgments, perhaps because he had the good sense to be guided by such men as Brummell and Lord Yarmouth.

It is almost impossible to estimate what the royal collection owes to the purchases of this charming Prince Florizel, although it must be admitted that the nation paid for most of

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them. He was quick to appreciate the masterpieces of the Dutch School, at a time when their vogue was not considerable. His best acquisition in this direction was Rembrandt's 'The Master Shipbuilder,' now in Buckingham Palace. His purchases of Regency furniture pieces, as well as of Chinese and Sèvres porcelain, have also turned out profitable investments.

The Regent's successor, William IV, did not share his brother's taste, which, perhaps, was just as well for the royal exchequer. It is reported that, on being asked what pictures

he wished sent to the saleroom, the bluff Sailor King replied: 'The whole fleet of 'em—battleships, frigates, gunboats, and all!'

Coming to our own day, the name of Queen Mary needs no mention. Her Majesty's versatility and expertise in art matters have received world-wide recognition. There are good grounds for the belief that these characteristics have been handed down to her grand-daughter, but, alas, our young Queen, in the present strenuous days, has few opportunities for pursuing the leisured quest of the antique.

# Peat-Fire Memories

## VI.—Old Cures and Beliefs

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KENNETH MACDONALD

MODERN science and education have killed out many of the old cures and beliefs, but it is amazing the number of them that remain until to-day. Old traditions die hard.

*Tinneas an rìgh*, 'the disease of the king'—that is to say, king's evil or scrofula, is still cured in parts of the Isles by the touch of the seventh son. My wife's brother was a king's evil doctor and I had the opportunity of seeing many cases of this illness being treated. The qualification was the seventh son or daughter in the family, with no intervening daughter or son. In some cases one intervening daughter was recognised. Some people maintained that the curing power was far stronger if there was an intervening daughter.

People came long distances to be cured of their ailment. I am voicing no opinion on the practice, but I know that it worked successfully. My father had a boil which refused to heal up. It was lanced by the doctor several times, and each time it filled

up again. Nor did my father believe in the seventh son doctor, but out of mere curiosity he decided to give the notion a trial. The seventh son cured him.

The patient must call early in the morning before partaking of any food. The doctor takes a bowl of warm water, dips his fingers in it, and then rubs them very gently backwards and forwards three times over the boil. This has to be done on three successive mornings.

A seventh daughter, as I have mentioned, could be a doctor also. I knew of one old lady who practised the art. One case was actually brought along after the old lady had died. It was during the interval between the death and the burial. A very young boy who had scrofula at the time was taken to the house, where the body was still lying in the coffin. The hand of the dead lady was dipped in a bowl of water and rubbed three times on the child's face. Enough, I should say, to cure anything, and also to scare a young boy



## PEAT-FIRE MEMORIES

out of his wits. In this case the hand was gloved and any healing properties the touch of the bare hand may have had were absent. The boy was cured.

THERE were also rhymes and incantations.

Styes were cured by incantation and a darning-needle. This has been done to my own eyes on more than one occasion. An old spinster did it in my case, and I do not know what qualification she had for the job. She chanted the following incantation in Gaelic: 'Why should one stye come and not two, why should two styes come and not three, three and not four,' and so on until ten was reached. On reaching ten, the figures were reversed: 'Why should ten come and not nine, nine and not eight,' and so on down to one, the final count being: 'Why should a stye come at all?' All the time the darning-needle was dabbed at the eye without actually touching it.

In like manner there was a rhyme for curing a swelling in the armpit. The swelling was called in Gaelic *mam*, probably from Latin *mamma*, a breast. I have never seen the cure effected, but I knew the old man in Laxdale who worked it, and I often begged his son to get the words of the rhyme before his father, who was old and frail, would die, but I was not successful. He used a hatchet and the sharp edge was pointed towards the swelling as he repeated his rhyme.

I knew one young girl of about ten years of age who took epileptic fits. I missed her from the village for a few days and asked her on her return where she had been. She said she had been down to the village of Back to see a doctor. This seemed strange to me as there were many doctors much nearer than Back. But it turned out that this was one of the old local 'doctors.' She told me that he had clipped her finger- and toe-nails and also cut some of her hair. This is probably a relic of the old Druidical customs of centuries ago.

*Teine De*, 'God's fire'—that is to say, shingles, was cured with the blood of a black cock or the blood of a Munro. Sprains were righted by tying a bit of the outermost thread in the weft tightly round the joint. To end lumbago, a person who was unnaturally born—that is, feet first instead of head first, had to stand on your back while you lay down on the floor.

CUTS and bruises were common ailments.

For cuts it was spider's web, or tobacco-leaf, or *breid loisgte* ('burnt cloth'). The last-named was a piece of folded cloth with salt homemade butter in between. The tongs were put in the fire and the *breid* squeezed between the two 'pennies' on the tong-legs until the butter sizzled. It was then put on the wound as hot as one could bear it. For festering wounds it was quite good and drew any matter out.

Boys who were always barefoot suffered mostly from foot injuries. Split toe-nails, through hitting them against stones, were always with us, but probably the worst of all was the hacks of March. In the dry spring weather the upper skin of the foot and between the toes hacked terribly. Nothing much could be done about the hacks and they were treated as a normal seasonal ailment. Bandaging was hopeless, because it never stayed on, and, even if it did, it was always soaking wet and was better off altogether. The boys grinned and bore it, but oh, what an agony it was to wash these hacked feet before bedtime.

Warts were cured by putting a bit of meat in a hole in a wall, and as the meat rotted away so did the wart. Washing the warts in lochs with certain properties was another cure.

Tonsillitis was treated with alum and pepper, but each village had its own expert for this disease. I was treated by one of these, who placed her finger down my throat and squeezed the swelling until it bled. I shall never forget it. Sterilising was unknown, and goodness knows where the finger had been before it went down my throat. Gargling with salt and water was also advocated.

For various types of stomach trouble the juice of *lus nan laogh*—coltsfoot, I presume—was drunk. Rheumatism, from which practically everybody suffered in later years, was eased by washing the feet with sea-water. I knew one old lady who used to give a halfpenny to the boys to go to the shore for a pailful of sea-water. But often they went to the nearest spring and old Annie did not seem to know a bit of difference.

*An greim mor*, 'the great pain'—that is to say, pneumonia, took a heavy toll, and nothing could be done about it. One just heard the comment: 'He took the *greim*, and he only stood it for three days.' I have heard

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of blood-drawing being tried, but I have never known of any cases.

One woman I knew had leeches or *geal-lalchean*. While threshing corn, a grain of oats struck her in the eye. She went about for a time with a tea-leaf poultice. Eventually she lost the eye, but at one stage of her trouble the leeches were regularly applied to suck out the blood. She kept them in a jam-jar in the window.

AT that time there were only three or four doctors in Lewis to look after the health of twenty-eight thousand people. One doctor had a horse and trap donated to him by the people; another rode on horseback—Dr Mackenzie, father of the well-known historian Agnes Mure Mackenzie. Doctors had a most difficult job. Roads were bad, distances were long, and, as a rule, medical help was not sent for until it was too late.

Pregnant women had an anxious time, as they worked hard on the croft until within hours of the birth of the child. Neither was there a recognised convalescing period, and they were at work again within a few days. I knew one woman who was up to her knees in salt-water with her creel and sickle cutting seaweed three days after the birth of her child. She was in her eighties when she died.

There were no dentists, and I remember the first one who came round our district about forty years ago. He had no dentist's chair or anæsthetic. His only implements were a pair of nippers or pliers and a jelly-jar for spitting into. He could have done quite well without the jelly-jar, for nobody was able to spit into it. With the excitement of the moment the saliva got sticky in the mouth

and one could not aim at such a small target as the mouth of a jelly-jar. As boys, when we had toothache, we sucked cloves or smeared the gum over with a preparation called jelly-paste. If the tooth was loose, a string was tied round it and the other end of the string tied to the door-knob. Then somebody would suddenly shut the door before you were ready for the operation—and the tooth was out before you had time to funk it.

For drawing matter out of a festering wound, if poulticing was not satisfactory, a bottle was used. The bottle was filled with hot water up to the shoulders, and its mouth placed firmly against the wound. Care had to be taken that no air got in at the mouth of the bottle. Then, as the water cooled, the condensed steam in the neck of the bottle left a vacuum, thus lessening the inside pressure. This caused a powerful sucking force from within the bottle. The method was a bit drastic, but I can assure you it drew all the matter out, and indeed it was difficult at times to get the bottle off.

Working at peats in dry windy weather caused much trouble through foreign matter getting into the eye. One way of clearing this was to stand facing the wind and blow the nose violently. Another was to bring the upper eyelid completely over the eye and move it round and round in all directions until the offending mote was got out. If these methods failed, there was always somebody in the village skilled in removing the irritant with the tongue. The tip of the tongue was put into the eye and moved backwards and forwards until the object was got rid of. This procedure was always effective, and the soft tongue did not in any way irritate the eye.

## O mihi præteritos . . .

(After Clément Marot)

*What aince I was I am nae mair;  
What aince I was I couldna be.  
My bonnie spring, my simmer fair  
Are clean awa', forsakin' me.*

*O Love, tae you I aye was fee'd,  
And a' my days I've dune your will;  
Let me but tak your arles again,  
I'll dae your day's darg better still!*

T. L. HOWIE.



## *No Colours for Cucharón*

VICTOR EDWARDS

THE sun was still high, the heat coming down in brassy, hammer-stroke waves. Now the dust round the corrals was beginning to settle, but Don Antonio could feel it gritty and dry in his mouth, round the rims of his eyes, and mingled with the sweat on his face as he turned from the fence to the little wooden table where a clerk sat with the piled stud-books.

The time of testing was over—that important time on every bull-breeding ranch when the final assessment of two years' hard work and much money was shown in the spirit of its young fighting bulls. One by one they had been driven into the corral, shut in with a mounted vaquero armed with a lance, which could pain but not injure, and their bravery carefully noted by their willingness to charge the horseman and take the punishment of the spear-point.

Pablo, head vaquero, his leathery face streaked with sweat and dirt, walked over to the table and said to Don Antonio: 'A good bunch, boss. That last one showed its Miura strain. In eighteen months he'll be as big as a cathedral.' He spat. 'Those matadors down there are going to shake in their fancy shoes when they see this batch of Molinos bulls in the ring.'

Pablo was squat and bowed, with a tough, knocked-about face and a neck like the bulls he tended. He despised all matadors. He could never understand how they could be paid five thousand pesetas an afternoon for doing things with bulls that he or any of his men would do every day for two hundred a week. To Pablo, 'down there,' said with a jerk of the thumb, meant any town or city, because Los Berrocos, the breeding-ranch of Don Antonio Molinos, spread itself over five hundred acres high up in the Sierra de Gredos, the mountain-range that split old Castile from Estremadura.

Fifteen years ago Don Antonio started the ranch with seventy acres, three seed-bulls—two Villamata and one Miura, and seventy-five heifers. He was a childless widower—his wife had died four years ago—a greying, taciturn man, whose emotional life was centred on his passionate love for the bulls.

Pablo rolled himself a cigarette. He licked the edge of the paper, struck a match against a greasy leather chap, and lit up. He said: 'And El Cucharón?'

'Still the same?' Don Antonio said.

'Still the same.'

'How many days is it now?'

'Sixteen without food, four without water.'

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'It must learn or die,' said Don Antonio. Pablo ground the cigarette with his heels. 'Then you lose the best bull you ever had.'

'No.' Don Antonio shook his head.

Pablo said stubbornly: 'I'm not wrong.'

Don Antonio picked up one of the big books from the table. He flicked through the pages, stopped, read quickly, then put it down again. 'Cucharón had two tests. In one it was too cowardly to charge the lance—'

Pablo cut in: 'And in the other he charged faster than anything I've seen in twenty years. You know what I think, boss? I think he got dust in its eyes or something and never saw the horse or man that first time.'

Their conversation showed how differently each of them saw the bulls. Pablo called every bull 'he' and when speaking to it the intimate 'thou.' Don Antonio called every bull 'it.' Both were aware of this subtle variation and both pretended to ignore it.

Don Antonio said in a heavy, patient voice: 'It's too uncertain, Pablo. Suppose it went into the ring and acted the coward. We'd be finished. They'd never stop laughing at Molinos bulls. I think the men were right when they named it El Cucharón—all it's fit for is a soup-kitchen.'

'It's easy to prove. Give him another test,' Pablo said.

'And have my licence taken away if it was known the bull had three tests? You know how these things get about. Why should I risk a heavy fine and even the closure of the ranch for one bull? Besides, if it refuses to eat from the trough how can you send it to the bull-ring days before a fight? What sort of shape would it be in? There's nothing we can do, Pablo.'

Pablo turned away. Don Antonio said: 'I'll see it,' and silently they walked down the rough pathway, past the corrals to the big stone-built bull-shed. It was cool inside, and coming out of the hard sunlight they blinked their eyes because they could not see clearly. Behind the high, four-inch-thick planks that shut off the corner stall a chain rattled and El Cucharón, the Soup-ladle, stamped.

Don Antonio stood on the wooden platform in front of the planks and looked over and down at the bull. It was big and rangy-looking. One fierce, red-rimmed eye stared up at him, glowing like a hot coal from hell-fire. The steel ring through its nose was chained to a steel post barely a foot away. The bull was just a frame of bones, with the

ribs standing out like curved strips, yet it held its weaponed head high and the eyes were still alert.

Pablo said suddenly: 'There's something you might have forgotten, boss. This is the longest time a bull of ours has refused corn from the trough. Doesn't that prove he's got plenty of spirit?'

Don Antonio got down from the platform. 'It proves nothing, Pablo, and you know it.'

'But if he eats, boss—if he gives in you will not have him slaughtered?'

Don Antonio looked at him. 'One would think this particular bull was your brother.' He slapped Pablo's shoulder. 'If it eats, I'll think about it. That's as far as I can possibly go.'

DON ANTONIO walked back to the ranch-house alone, thinking about the bull and knowing he would not let it die chained in that stall. He could never see any bull die in that ignominious, inhuman fashion. In the ring or the slaughterhouse, yes. That was different. He would give Cucharón one more day. If it still did not eat he would let it return to the pasture to feed and then, eventually, send it to the slaughterer.

Back at the house he went straight to his office. Round the plain stone walls there were rows of photographs of bulls. A big one over his chair had streamers of black and yellow silk fastened to the frame—the Molinos colours. The legend underneath read: 'Punchon 52—Died bravely under the sword of the matador Gallito in the Madrid ring, July 19, 1946.'

José, cook and handyman, came in wiping his hands on his apron and Don Antonio said: 'I'll eat at seven.' Then he started paging through the stud-books, classifying the season's bulls for shipment.

When he finally cleared his desk, the sun, resting on a distant peak, glowed red through the window. He stood looking out at the peak, lilac-coloured and beautiful, twenty miles away and yet so sharp and detailed in the clear air he felt he could reach out his hand and touch it.

He only half-heard the urgent, running footsteps up the gravel path. There was a knock on the door and Pablo stood there grinning, not able to keep the excitement out of his voice. 'He's eating and drinking right



## NO COLOURS FOR CUCHARÓN

now,' he said. 'It took five of us to do it, but we did it.'

IT was three afternoons later that Pepe Morales, the fight-promoter, arrived in his battered car. The word had gone round about the Molinos testing. Don Antonio and Pepe sat sipping drinks on the verandah for an hour, talking about everything but bulls, and then Pepe, stroking back his slick hair and staring into his glass, made a casual reference to a corrida he was promoting in seven weeks' time.

Don Antonio showed polite interest. Pepe spread his hands and said: 'It is not an important one, you understand? It is at Sobrepena, a poor town. We shall not draw much money.'

Don Antonio clicked his tongue sympathetically and waited.

Pepe said: 'I thought, perhaps, if you had one or two indifferent bulls.'

Don Antonio looked at him.

Pepe said hastily: 'I did not mean it like that. I meant any bulls that did not come up to the exceptionally high Molinos standard of rating. We cannot afford . . . you know how poor Sobrepena is.'

'Why do you promote a fight there, then?'

'Well, the Fiesta, and then,' Pepe looked at the breeder carefully, 'we might get a good matador . . . and Seville is only fifteen miles away. But it is all a gamble, Don Antonio. You people can never see our side of the business. The bulls, the matadors, picadors, banderilleros, helpers, sweepers, bands, doctors, a thousand other things, all costing money—and then it rains.'

Don Antonio held up his hand with a smile. 'Spare me all that, Pepe. I've heard it all before.'

'Another thing,' Pepe said, 'would you like to see your best bulls assassinated by a lot of damned novices, which we will have to get for a small promotion like this, or would you rather save them so that they can carry your colours to glory with top-rank matadors in the big cities like Madrid, Seville, Toledo? It is out of respect for your feelings, Don Antonio, that I ask for . . . er . . . indifferent bulls.'

'I bet it is,' Don Antonio said. 'First, it's the price, and now it's my feelings. This is what I will do for you, Pepe. I'll let you have six bulls. Five will be good. You will pay

my price for them. The sixth, my friend, I will give to you. I will give it to you free and for nothing. But it is likely to be a very bad bull. A very cowardly bull. Its name is Cucharón, and it is not to enter the ring with my colours.'

Pepe snorted. 'What the bull is like is the matador's worry, not mine. Personally, if I was ever crazy enough to go in the ring with one, I would ask that it be cowardly. There's only one thing I want to know—the price.'

'To you—twelve thousand pesetas each for the five.'

'Make it ten thousand and it's a bargain,' said Pepe.

'Eleven thousand and you can take your pick,' said Don Antonio.

'Agreed,' said Pepe. 'Fix the papers and I'll come up again next week with one of the boys and write the cheque.' He stood up and held out his hand. Don Antonio took it and said coldly: 'No colours for Cucharón. Remember that, Pepe. If you fail me on that, you will never have another bull from Los Berrocos.'

'Don't worry,' said Pepe.

Don Antonio stood watching Pepe drive away in his dusty car. Then he called José and told him to get Pablo.

Pablo's chunky figure came up the pathway almost immediately, as though he had been waiting out of sight. He looked up at Don Antonio on the verandah and said: 'That crook Morales gone? How many bulls is he taking?'

Don Antonio said: 'Five—and Cucharón.'

Pablo grinned. 'When?'

'In about six weeks. Fighting at Sobrepena.'

'Boss, can I take them down?'

Don Antonio looked at him for a long minute. 'Yes,' he said, and went back into his office.

PABLO tried to tell himself he was relaxed.

The sun was warm on his back. Everyone around him was happy, waiting for the bullfight to start. The boys whistled across at the girls because it was Fiesta time, the crowd clapped every time a sweeper walked into the ring and dragged a broom over the sand. The sky was like a dark bruise of cloudless heat and not a breath of wind stirred the flags and bunting that decorated the stadium towers. But Pablo was not at ease. He couldn't stop

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thinking about Cucharón, down there in the dungeon-like stall beneath the stadium, waiting to come up into the sunlight—and death.

Pablo looked round at the crowd. The last-minute announcement that the great Juanito from Mexico would appear had packed them in by the thousands. He thought of the hard-earned hundred pesetas he had paid as a bribe so that the draw for the bulls was fixed and Cucharón went to Juanito, the best matador of the lot. A hundred pesetas! It was a fortune. I'm going crazy, he thought. Crazy about a bull at my age—and all the bulls I've seen. Well, everything was behind him now—the money and the arguments, the weeks of patient work building up Cucharón to physical perfection; the strange affection he felt for the bull, the way he had been the only man on the ranch that Cucharón would allow within twenty feet. But the trouble was the affection was not behind him. It was still with him, stronger than ever. He tried hard to be cynical about it all, to think that Don Antonio was probably right, that Cucharón was all cowardice.

He sat there waiting, hardly seeing the pageantry, the ceremonial. It flowed past him in a series of fleeting, camera impressions, red and gold and the yellow of sand—the saluting and bowing and strutting; the band playing the stirring bull-fight march '*La Virgen de la Macarena*'; music coming and fading on the still air; and the fights, the beautiful imagery of man and beast in settings of brilliant colours, fixed for split-seconds that held in the memory for ever. And always he found himself thinking of Cucharón.

It was near the end of the afternoon when Cucharón came out in a woof of dust, head up, tail lashing, the great hump of muscle rising on the shoulders, the horns curved like twin sabres, all movement and beauty.

Pablo leaned forward, kneading a fist into his palm. He looked down and saw Juanito folding a cape, methodically, unhurriedly, waiting behind the wooden barrera as two of his helpers stepped out to run Cucharón for him.

Cucharón charged instantly, whirled, and charged again and again, and they took him backwards and forwards as though the whole thing was on elastic, just in front of the barrera, so that Juanito could study every movement and judge whether the bull favoured the left or right horn when hooking at the cloth.

Then Juanito was out there alone. And Pablo knew that everything was going to be all right, that everything was going to be perfect. He lifted his eyes to heaven and said to the man next to him: 'Look at that. I say, will you look at that. He's a flag bull. Juanito's got the bull of the century.'

Cucharón was charging again, straight as an arrow, going for the cape, not the man, the kind of bull a matador dreams about, charging so straight and accurately for the cloth that you could lay a string along the line of charge and know that the bull would follow it, not deviating half-an-inch. A bull that the matador can do the impossible with.

Cucharón took the punishment of the picador and banderilleros, and still the power and spring, the terrific will to fight, were in its body.

Then Juanito was alone with it again, taking it through a series of linked passes, slowly, smoothly, working so close to the horns that they brushed his curved-in stomach at every charge, and for long moments the crowd had to hold its breath. He finished with a *media veronica*, the bull trying to turn in its own length, he gathering the cape and seeming to wind the bull round himself, fixing it in one spot and walking away from it, back turned with superb arrogance. At the end of it the crowd was standing, wild with excitement, cheering and clapping, throwing gifts into the ring in that mad enthusiasm that only happens at the bull-fight.

The final phase of the fight came. It was time to kill. Juanito paid his respects to the President's box, and hatless, with sword and muleta, went out to face Cucharón for the last time.

The bull stood in the centre of the ring, head still high, watching its enemy. Then Juanito did a strange thing. He stopped seven feet from the bull and knelt down on one knee facing it. The afternoon had been his greatest triumph, probably the greatest he would ever have, and no one heard him say: '*Toro, brave Toro, I love thee.*'

He stood up, walked closer, unfurled the muleta in his left hand, and sighted along the blade of the sword in his right, poised for the long voyage in, stomach over the horn, for the kill.

The first cry came from a woman. '*Indulto,*' she cried. Instantly Pablo was on his feet. '*Indulto,*' he roared, '*indulto.*' Then twenty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand were shouting for

## THE NAVY SALUTES

that rarest of all honours of the bull-fight—indulgence for the bull.

Juanito furlled the muleta and fearlessly turned his back on Cucharón, walking towards the President's box. Cucharón stood motionless, waiting for the next attack.

Juanito bowed before the President's box and made the usual polite speech. The President stood and bowed—he was the mayor of Sobrepena—and made the sign of grace.

The crowd was roaring its approval. Pablo

sat motionless, crying unashamedly, staring through tears out there at Cucharón, who would never fight in a ring again, who would be an honoured seed-bull back at Los Berrocos, who would live his life out and give the boss many fine, brave bulls.

Already Cucharón was being driven out of the ring by men with goads. Pablo ran to the edge of the wall and looked down at one of them. He snarled: 'Careful with that, you big slop—that's a Molinos bull you're driving.'

# The Navy Salutes

## A. CECIL HAMPSHIRE

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the apparent free-and-easiness of shipboard life, sailors are probably required to salute more often than their colleagues in the shore-bound Services. Every time a sailor boards his own or any other warship he must 'salute the gangway.' In plain clothes he must raise his hat when he steps over the gangway, as should every civilian visitor. It is partly for this reason that, although plain clothes may be worn at will by petty officers and above when proceeding on or returning from leave at a naval barracks, the rig must include a hat, for the entrance-gate is the 'gangway.'

Officers and men salute whenever they set foot on a warship's quarterdeck. It is sometimes said that this particular salute is a lingering survival from the days when a crucifix hung aft in warships, but the religious upheavals in our history render such an origin doubtful. The quarterdeck has always been the seat of authority, and in the old days it was the custom of all officers stationed there to acknowledge the salute of a newcomer by raising their hats.

Every morning, at eight o'clock in summer and nine in winter, the ceremony of hoisting the colours takes place in every ship and shore

establishment of the Royal Navy. In the manner of Mohammedans facing Mecca, officers and men face aft in ships, or towards the ensign staff ashore, and salute. The same obeisance must be made when colours are hauled down at sunset. The origin of this ceremony, which is a direct link with the naval mutinies of 1797, dates back to an order, issued by Earl St Vincent in June 1800, directing 'guards to be paraded every morning with the form and order practised on the best regulated parades . . . for the maintenance of order and the preservation of His Majesty's Ships of the Line from fire and the dreadful calamities incident thereto.'

Sailors are required to salute all naval, Marine, military, Air Force, Dominion, Colonial, and foreign officers in uniform—and any of them they know by sight in plain clothes as well—the colours of the Royal Navy, King's and regimental colours of the Army, and the standards of cavalry regiments when uncased or unfurled, and all funeral processions.

**T**HE naval salute is a distinctive gesture compared with that of the other Services.

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The Army and Air Force salute is given with the fingers turned outwards, but sailors keep the palm of the hand towards the ground. There are several theories to account for this difference, the most generally accepted being that before 1890 naval officers and men always uncovered their heads in the presence of a superior, and the movement to-day represents the first motion of removing the hat. That tough old disciplinarian, St Vincent, somewhat surprisingly, invariably doffed his hat when in conversation with an inferior as well as with a superior, even if the former was only a midshipman. Eventually, Queen Victoria decided that she did not approve of men in uniform standing about bareheaded, and hence the naval salute was born.

Sailors never salute between decks on board ship. In cabins they remove their caps, but Marines, as sworn men, keep their caps on and salute as in the Army. On pay-days men below the rating of petty officer remove their caps at the pay table, but this is not so much a salute as an easier manner of collecting the money. This practice dates back to Cromwell's day, when for the first time in years sailors began to receive cash instead of promises, and swept the coins into their upturned hats.

Before the 'beak' at the defaulters' table the offender's head must be uncovered and his cap taken charge of during the hearing by the vigilant Master-at-Arms, for it has not been unknown in the past for a recalcitrant prisoner to hurl his headdress at the stern figure of justice before him. Accordingly, the temptation is nowadays gently but firmly removed.

**N**AUTICAL salutes are not confined to the hand, for salutes are also given by ships and in boats. Warships do not dip their ensigns to one another, but pay their respects by means of bands, bugles, and the whistle known as the boatswain's call.

When steaming past a flagship or senior officer's ship which is also under way the junior ship makes her obeisance by sounding the 'alert' on a bugle. The captain faces the senior ship and salutes and the men on deck stand to attention and face outboard. The ship saluted replies in similar fashion, but is the first to sound the 'carry on.'

When passing a flagship at anchor both

vessels when possible mount a guard and band, and do the thing in style. As they draw abreast, the junior ship sounds the 'alert' and her Marine guard presents arms, while the band prepares to play the ceremonial piece of music to which the Great Man is entitled by regulation. By this time the 'alert' has been sounded in the flagship, usually by as 'tiddly,' that is to say, smart, a bugler as possible, just to show the junior how it should be done, and her guard receives the salute with sloped arms.

The smallest craft flying the White Ensign, including submarines, must follow this traditional piece of nautical etiquette, although the best that can be done may be only a shrill wail from the boatswain's call. Occasionally, however, when the crew of a junior ship includes a man who can play the bugle and the captain has managed to scrounge one of these precious instruments, it is possible to startle the lordly Officer of the Watch on board the flagship with a brazen blast, when he expects only a weary whistle.

In the Navy's early days saluting between warships caused considerably more fuss. Ships were then 'manned,' which meant that all hands lined the bulwarks at close intervals right round the upper-deck. This salute had a more subtle meaning, for with the crew thus disposed a ship's intentions were revealed to be friendly, since her guns could obviously not be manned at the same time. Nowadays, 'manning ship' is reserved for very special occasions.

When a naval boat is under way in the vicinity of a warship at the time of the colours ceremony her engines must be stopped when the 'alert' sounds. Oars are tossed or sheets let fly if the boat is being rowed or sailed, and the coxswain must stand up and salute. If his boat is heavily laden the coxswain may content himself by simply saluting. Similarly, if his craft is being towed he need not halt the procession, for here seamanship takes precedence over punctiliousness.

**W**ARSHIPS have a duty to perform when a boat passes bearing indications that a V.I.P. is aboard. For very distinguished persons the 'alert' is sounded, when all hands on the upper-deck stop work, face outboard, and stand to attention. Woe betide any hapless wight who chooses such a moment to shoot a bucket of gash through the scuttle.



## HEEL-BALL AND WILLIAM COLE

Whenever the commanding-officer of a naval vessel, however junior in rank, members of a court-martial, the Officer of the Guard, or a foreign naval officer boards a British warship the side must be piped by the Quarter-master and his boatswain's mates. Contrary to popular belief, this salute is not a privileged right of the Lord Mayor of London as Admiral of the Port or of any other similar official, although in fact it is often given as a courtesy.

When a naval court-martial is about to sit, a gun is fired to signify the opening of the court. This is known as the 'rogue's gun' or 'one gun salute,' and its origin dates back to the days when keelhauling was still a naval punishment. As the dripping male-

factor was drawn up out of the sea a gun was fired over his head 'in order to astonish and confound him.'

A special table of salutes in boats is laid down for those in charge of small craft, and they range from the entire crew standing up in the presence of a royal personage to the coxswain's hand-salute when embarking a 'wart' or junior officer. Probably the most impressive naval personal salute is the tossing of oars in boats afloat, when the 15-foot ash blades flash up as one. This salute, one of the oldest, is reserved for high and low alike, for it is given only to royalty and commanders-in-chief with flags flying, and to the humblest seaman whose body is passing on its last journey.

## Heel-Ball and William Cole

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W. MURRAY MARSDEN

TO some people two of these words will suggest, if anything, the strenuous and fuggy interior of a scrum at Rugby football. To myself they recall certain dark thickish discs superficially about the size of a penny but much thicker, of a rather aromatic smell, and marked on their surfaces with some sort of pattern. They were a special treasure to us children, but to William Cole they were part of his equipment, for with them, as we knew and had witnessed, he waxed the threads wherewith he worked as a cobbler. Distant figure as he is, I must not leave him waiting any longer in that annexe of the large rectory kitchen where our meetings mostly took place.

For William Cole was not only the cobbler in that village of a parish in the 'tendring hundred' of Essex, but he was also the postman, at least in so far as it was he who brought the letters each morning. He might have amongst them one with the crest of the

Athenæum Club for our grandfather, or again an O.H.M.S. from the War Office for our father. There would almost certainly be more than one for our mother, addressed in legible, if elegant, writing by some of her female relations in Scotland or Ireland, for our mother was all her days a good and diligent writer and answerer of letters.

IT was not, however, in either of his official capacities that William Cole was so special a friend—or even a kind of hero of ours. No. For, besides the mail which he faithfully delivered, he used—memory tells me—quite often to bring items of flora and fauna, which, with us perhaps in mind, he had gathered to himself on his way beside the ample hedgerows and along the leafy lanes of that Victorian countryside. He it was that first made us intimate, so to say, with snapdragon or butter-and-eggs, with its face-like florets.

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But his chiefest gifts were the larvæ of lepidopterous insects accompanied by some appropriate food-plant.

It was he who taught me how to infer the presence of a caterpillar feeding on a plant from the sight of its faeces on a leaf lower down. In fact, our William Cole—sometimes shortened between ourselves to Cole—was a born and careful observer. We youngsters were in very good hands.

To many, though, and perhaps to our elders, William Cole was not a wholly attractive personality. Of a middle height, he was brownish in appearance, as of Essex clay, and he would never have denied that his leathery skin looked, at best, unwashed or that he carried with him a quite distinctive smell transcending that of the aromatic heel-ball. But, no matter for that, he remained a hero for us, and especially so in regard to another of his qualities—this probably unknown to our elders.

For our William Cole was a raconteur, something of a spellbinder. The eloquences came suddenly. He might, for instance, have just delivered to us some pupæ of the death's-head moth, with instructions how to treat them, when off he would go in his Essex speech with its characteristic vowels and sing-song. 'Thaas another battle I could tell you about which was fought,' and he would name a spot down on the marshland. 'That was a wunnerful fierce battle, that was.' And so on. To-day it seems to me that our friend must have had doings in his day with smugglers and excisemen—to account for the battles in which he had apparently taken part. However that may have been, there was about the battles as he recounted them to us something of an aura of the Napoleonic days. We could not but feel amid his weird eloquences the thought that 'Boney' could not have been far away.

AS for the matter of heel-ball itself, in warm young hands and pockets the discs would soften, exude a strong scent, and gradually become malleable, even ductile, by young fingers into other shapes. Doubtless we

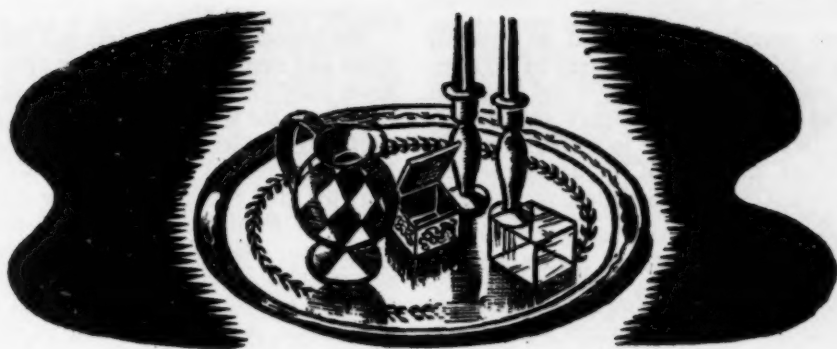
carried that aromatic smell wherever we went until rebukes robbed us of our treasure. The substance itself we met in later years as a very helpful medium for the binding of cricket-bats or the splicing of rods.

Considerable experience of polishing old oak furniture under our father's guidance had made us well acquainted with the substance and properties of beeswax, whose presence we suspected in heel-ball. Of course, heel-ball may nowadays be just an article of commerce with no magic or even mystery about it. And even in those days it may have been commonly known as cobbler's wax.

But, like other people, one morning William Cole blotted his copybook. In his enthusiasm he brought along for us the body of a large stoat slain 'by that gert old cat of Mayhew's.' Here was something to be skinned as my father skinned his ornithological specimens.

Resolved to possess myself of the pelt, it was not long before I had left the house for that part of the policies known as the Wilderness, where I thought I could attempt my task undisturbed. That it was no simple or savoury one anybody who has skinned a stoat will allow. Therefore my condition on returning later to the nursery precincts was not regarded with favour. Probably I was not only dirty, but malodorous, and it was not long before our relations with William Cole were severed.

Perhaps, as a familiar of nature, as well as no truckler to convention, the very active little man came into conflict with the Law, became then a poacher, was 'had up' and perhaps sentenced to a term of imprisonment by that bench of magistrates amongst whom our kindly and scholarly old grandfather had his place. Whatever happened, he came no more to the Rectory—and so we lost him, except in memory. I think shame to myself to be writing these invidious words about our childhood's friend and mentor. The scent of heel-ball steals over me. I still remember how to look for caterpillars and the feel of a death's-head moth's caterpillar's claspers on my fingers. The professional entomologists may, perhaps must, have had their William Coleses to put them in the right way.



## *The Gifts*

CHRISTINE SHERWIN

MRS MUNDLE sat alone in her front-room beneath the portrait of Mr Mundle in oils and alderman's robes. It had been an afternoon of sad surprises, and perhaps it was just as well that poor William had not been there to share it.

It was with much regret that Martha Mundle had decided to sell most of the handsome furniture of which she was so proud. But No. 2 Clarence Villas was getting beyond her, and there was little room for heavy furnishings in the small flat to which she was going. So Mr Briggs had come to value her things, and the visit had proved even less enjoyable than she had anticipated.

Artie Briggs, as he was generally known, was a successful man in his way, for he had a second-hand furniture-shop in the High Street, as well as a small antique business in Mill Lane. Too plain-spoken and gruff to be widely popular, Artie had, nevertheless, a reputation for fair dealing.

'Bit on the big side for these days,' he had said of the best-bedroom suite, and had added a figure that was as insulting to the imposing mahogany wardrobe as it was to William's discrimination. 'Not to the public taste,' had been his comment on the dining-room sideboard. As for the handsome hat-rack and

umbrella-stand in the front passage! Well, Mrs Mundle still wondered if she had heard aright. Could he possibly have murmured ten and sixpence, as he scribbled in his nasty little book? But Mr Briggs's final remark, as he warmed himself before the sitting-room fire, was one that she would never repeat—not even to herself! 'Might give you something for the frame,' he had said, glancing casually at William's portrait.

Something for the frame! And nothing, presumably, for William. Not that she had ever entertained the idea of selling him. Martha Mundle found herself quite unable to reply, and by the time that she had discovered a suitable retort, he was gone.

Yes, now, thank goodness, Mr Briggs was gone. He had put his little black book in his pocket and departed, promising to tot up his depressing figures and let her have the exact total on the morrow.

THE church clock struck the half-hour. Four-thirty; time for tea. Martha sighed, took her apron from behind the cushion where she had hidden it from her visitor's eye, and went out to the kitchen to find the small brown teapot, the sliced loaf,

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the margarine, and, just for a treat, the last pot of vegetable-marrow jam.

'Forty pounds,' she repeated, as presently she sat before the fire, her tea-tray on her knee. Forty pounds for all that beautiful furniture. For that had been Mr Briggs's approximate figure. Well, she'd have to spend some of it on a divan, for none of her handsome bedsteads would fit comfortably into the new little flat. Poky, that flat was, no matter what people said.

'You're lucky, Aunt Martha,' her niece Joan had assured her. 'You certainly can't go on running up and down stairs at your age, looking after lodgers. And it was such a good idea of Stan's to sell the house cheap to people who could pass you on a nice little flat.'

Lodgers! What a word! She had never used it. 'I shall miss my paying-guests,' had been her stiff reply. As for being lucky, Martha thought with reluctance of the three small rooms, the tiny scullery, and the bathroom that was only 'use of.'

'If I were you,' Joan had continued, 'I'd ask Miss Pinn to come and share. You don't really need the third room, and it would help with the rent.'

Miss Pinn! Agnes, the poor relation! She who had never owned either house or husband, and who dressed in other people's discarded clothes!

Every Christmas Martha Mundle sent a generous cheque to Agnes Pinn, her impecunious cousin. Every autumn she invited her to stay for a week and sent her home enriched by useful gifts, such as clothes that she herself no longer wanted, a good fruit-cake, or a packet of tea, and always five shillings for her fare. For Martha was fond of Agnes Pinn. But she was, after all, merely a poor relation. To set up house with her, to treat her as an equal—that would hardly do.

But thinking of Agnes reminded Martha that to-morrow she would be here on her last annual visit to Clarence Villas, and there was one thing she must be sure to remember to do. For there was a certain little ritual that was always observed when Agnes came to stay, a ritual that had its origin in genuine kindness.

Accordingly Martha fetched the big brown tray from its place on the dining-room sideboard, and, placing it on the sitting-room table, proceeded to divest the mantelpiece of its handsome ornaments. There were the two bronze shepherdesses, the large and richly-

tinted ginger-jars that almost matched, and the imposing marble clock.

Mrs Mundle carried the tray into the dining-room and stowed these treasures away on the lower shelf of the sideboard. This done, she took from the shelf above, a small pink-and-white jug, a glass paperweight, a tiny silver box, and a pair of china candlesticks. These were the little oddments that poor Agnes had given her from time to time, as marks of gratitude. Martha carried them into the sitting-room. Certainly they did not make much of a show arranged along the mantelshelf. Still, Agnes would be gratified to see them, so there they should remain throughout her visit. Martha sighed a little, missing her handsome clock, although it had not gone properly for years. She rearranged the shelf with the pink jug in the middle, but, try as she might, the effect was somehow tatty.

A LOUD rat-tat at the front-door nearly caused Martha to drop a candlestick. Probably Mr Briggs. That was how he had announced himself earlier in the day. Had he finished his totting-up and returned already to present her with the total?

'My umbrella,' said Mr. Briggs. 'Believe I left it in the sitting-room.'

'Your umbrella? I didn't notice—'

A coarse man! Without even pausing to wipe his feet, he followed her down the passage. Mrs Mundle hurried on ahead with the hope of saving the carpet, for it was a wet evening. But she was too late, for he had followed her in and unhooked his umbrella from the back of a chair. At the same moment his eye fell upon the pink-and-white jug. 'Hullo!' exclaimed Mr Briggs, and, striding to the mantelpiece, he picked up the jug, and, after a moment's scrutiny, turned it upside down.

Two tin-tacks and a button fell upon the carpet. With pursed lips, Martha bent down and picked them up. The nerve! When had she asked him to price her ornaments?

Mr Briggs replaced the jug and picked up the little silver box. He turned it over several times, then flipped it open as if looking for more buttons. 'William,' he declared.

Martha was puzzled, for was not William hanging over the mantelpiece?

'The third,' amended Mr Briggs, and passed on to the paperweight. He held it for some time, turning it this way and that. 'Very



nice,' he said. 'A collector might be interested.'

As he put it down, his roving eye alighted on the candlesticks. Heedless of Mrs Mundle's glacial silence, he examined them with much apparent pleasure. 'Crown Derby,' he told her affably. 'Very charming. Very early.' He stood for a moment, rubbing the side of his nose. 'Should you consider selling—' he hazarded, and to Mrs Mundle's surprise he added, 'ma'am.'

This was Martha's chance. 'I have no more intention,' she interrupted him, 'of selling my ornaments than of selling my late husband's portrait.' With a firm gesture she handed him the umbrella, which seemed about to be mislaid for the second time.

NEXT day, after an enjoyable midday dinner of rabbit-pie and marmalade pudding, Martha Mundle and Agnes Pinn carried their teacups to the sitting-room fire. It was a pleasant conclusion to a delicious meal, and already Martha was feeling better. Agnes's appreciation of her good food and comfortable surroundings was as balm to her hostess's pride, so badly wounded the previous afternoon by Mr Briggs. The role of gracious benefactress was more than usually agreeable to her to-day.

'I see you give my little gifts the place of honour,' Agnes was obviously gratified. 'I take so much pleasure, dear, in trying to pick up something a little *special* for you. I cannot afford to give much money, as you know, so I make up as best I can in time and trouble.'

Poor Agnes had always been one for picking up, and doubtless her tiny bed-sitting-room was cluttered up with bits and bobs like the ones she gave away. This was another reason why Martha didn't want her in the new flat. She would want to bring them with her. But now she smiled graciously. 'It's very kind of you, dear, I'm sure,' was her reply.

As she spoke, her quick ear caught the click of the letter-box flap, and going into the passage she found the type-addressed envelope on the mat. Mr Briggs's totting-up! She carried it into the sitting-room, for she could

open it in front of Agnes, who naturally would not expect to be informed of matters that did not concern her.

Martha had half-hoped the totting-up would produce a noticeable improvement on Mr Briggs's rough estimate. But in this she was disappointed, for at the bottom of the type-written list of items was the total—forty-one pounds ten and sixpence. Well, Agnes might look inquisitive, but she would be told nothing. She was about to refold the ultimatum, when her eye caught the inscription P.T.O. at the foot of the page, and there overleaf was a scrawl in Mr Briggs's crude uneducated hand. 'Should you consider selling the undermentioned items,' he had appended, 'I can offer you a further sixty-five pounds, though I consider it my duty to inform you that they might fetch an appreciably higher price in the auction-room.' Below were listed the bits and bobs that were Agnes's gifts. Martha's eyes skimmed down the column, and there it was again, the amazing total—sixty-five pounds. She was unable to restrain an exclamation. But Agnes's 'Anything wrong, dear?' brought her to herself. She folded the letter and stuffed it in her bag. 'Wrong? Why, no, nothing at all.'

Looking at her visitor, Martha had the strangest impression that their relationship had somehow changed. It was almost as if Agnes, and not she, were sitting behind the teapot and dispensing favours. But it was an absurd, indeed a ridiculous, feeling, one to be quickly shaken off, and she suddenly remembered that upstairs in her cupboard was a good brown skirt that she had not worn since Easter. Indeed, there was nothing wrong with it, except that it was a trifle tight and had a small soup-stain, that hardly showed at all. It *had* seemed a trifle too good for Agnes. But now a wave of generosity swept over her. She would not only give the skirt, she would throw in as well the brown shoes that pinched her, and the handbag with the zip that stuck.

With her usual kindly hospitality, and the accustomed gesture of a benefactress, Martha Mundle pressed a second cup of tea upon her cousin Agnes Pinn.

# Mead-making Revived

THOMPSON PEAT

*The berries of the grape with Furies swell,  
But in the honeycomb the Graces dwell.*

**T**O-DAY, in the picturesque old village of Gulval, nestling snugly in the pretty vale of the Trevayler in Cornwall, the ancient craft of mead-making has been revived. Production on a commercial scale, far exceeding the dreams of any medieval mead-maker, is now well under way, and the industry is already beginning to bring much needed hard currency to Britain by reason of the very large quantities of this traditional liquor that are going to overseas countries.

Under the direction of Britain's leading authority on meads, Lt.-Col. G. R. Gayre, the Worshipful Company of Mead Makers are established at the Mead House, surrounded in an almost medieval atmosphere by its high granite-walled herb- and bee-gardens. The Mead House, itself built of Cornish granite, with its high gables, oak floors, and old oak beams, holds the great polished-oak vats in which the meads are made and produced in the Continental tradition.

In a personally-conducted tour of the Mead House, Lt.-Col. Gayre says: 'This traditional drink of five hundred years ago—clear golden-yellow nectar with its subtle bouquet—is made from pure honey, some varieties blended with herbs, fermented, and aged to vintage maturity. The alcoholic content of the meads is slightly higher than most corresponding imported wines. Mead is not a synthetic substitute, nor a home-produced imitation of foreign wine, but a liquor of great tradition, excellence, and quality—as native to our table as wine is to the French.'

'The best meads,' Lt.-Col. Gayre continues, 'and the best wines are both superb, and the subtle flavour and delicate aroma of a vintage mead yields no whit of greatness to the grape. Each is worthy of the same profound respect

—partners rather than rivals. Like the grape wines, meads cover the entire range of civilised man's requirements, from appetisers, dry table meads, and sweet dessert meads, to honey liqueurs and brandies.' To see and drink these liquors is a great experience for the learned wine-drinker as he senses their subtle bouquet of a thousand woodland blossoms and watches the golden nectar shot through with yellow flecks of dancing light.

**I**T is most probable that meads were man's earliest alcoholic drinks. There are records of mead being drunk five thousand years ago in India. Plato and Plutarch refer to meads as the drink of their ancestors 'before wine was invented.' The ancient Greeks and the Romans both had many varieties of meads. In the mythology of these two races meads held a privileged and sacred position. Nectar, the fabulous drink of the Greek gods, was a form of mead. The Romans offered libations of the liquor to their gods of love and fertility, and their belief in the aphrodisiac qualities of honey survives in the English and French terms 'honeymoon' and '*lune de miel*.' Both have their origin in the Gothic custom of husband and wife supping meads for one month (moon) after marriage.

To Norseman and Celt meads were a magic drink bestowing the gifts of song and poetry and endowing the drinker with immortality. Later, meads became the national traditional liquors of Anglo-Saxon and medieval Britain, and remained so until their popularity declined rapidly after the Reformation. By the end of the 17th century the commercial collapse of the mead industry was complete. Thereafter, and until the foundation of the Worshipful Company of Mead Makers in Cornwall in 1947, this traditional golden ambrosia was made with increasing rarity, and was only to

## MEAD-MAKING REVIVED

be come upon in a few odd corners of rural Britain.

**F**ORTUNATELY, the knowledge of mead-making was never completely lost. From time immemorial those truest of historians, the poets and playwrights, reflecting the temper and customs of their time, have delighted in writing of the liquors they drank. There are numerous references to meads in the *Rigveda* of the Aryans, in the Odes of Horace, in the *Aeneid* of Virgil, in the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*, in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in Samuel Pepys's writings of Charles II, and in many other famous works.

Few people—townfolks especially—from personal experience know that in these islands there are places where this delightful old-world beverage is still a drink in common use. In lonely hamlets, isolated farmhouses, and stately mansions throughout the country the art has been preserved. That writer of versatile power and many moods, Maurice Hewlett, writing of the Wiltshire people, records: 'They send their turkeys to the London market, and, for their own Christmas fare, they eat their pigs, literally from head to foot, and for their drink, it is mead.' 'Mead,' he continues, 'is a noble liquor, but asks, even demands, moderation . . .' A more remarkable record of meads is in the publication *The closet of the eminently learned Sir Kenelm Digby, Kt., Opened, Whereby is discovered Several Ways of Making Metheglin, Sider, Cherry Wine, etc., together with excellent directions for Cookery, as also for Preserving, Conserving, Candyng, etc.* In this work that erratic genius, its author, devotes very large space to recipes for making mead and metheglin—the Welsh name for the beverage. He gives in all 112 pages to these recipes, and a study of his work indicates that in his day the quality and character of the old-world drink were determined by skilful use of fragrant herbs—many of which are no longer to be found—combined with the fermented honey solution.

**I**N promoting a revival of this ancient craft the Cornish enterprise has given great consideration to all the traditional history of mead, even to the provision of the type of

ancient drinking-vessels out of which these drinks were quaffed. It was customary to drink meads from vessels of three types—special mead-glasses, wooden methers-cups, or the magnificent silver and maplewood mazer, this last being a drinking-cup of very great beauty and character. Chaucer refers to mead in a mazer-cup (mazelyn) when he writes:

*They sette hym first sweete wyn  
And mede in a mazelyn,  
And roial spicerye.*

There are some very famous surviving examples of these medieval drinking-vessels, like the All Souls mazer at Oxford, the Rochester mazer in the British Museum, and in Scotland are preserved the fine St Mary's, the Ferguson, the Tulloch, and the St Leonard's mazers. Another reference to the mazer is in that old Scottish ballad 'Gil Morrice'

*Then up and spak the bauld baron,  
An angry man was he;  
He's ta'en the table wi' his foot,  
Sae has he wi' his knee;  
Till siller cup and ezar dish  
In flinders he garred flee.*

Many writers have emphasised the importance of the drinking-vessel, and to this end the aesthetics of drinking have not been overlooked by the modern mead-makers, as they also offer to the wine-drinker that added pleasure of quaffing the meads of his choice and seeing the yellow reflection of the golden liquor on the mazer's brim. Reproductions of these drinking-cups, with three sizes to choose from, each for its special mead, are now also being manufactured and are obtainable in limited numbers.

The revival of the ancient craft of mead-making may well bring back to us the old everyday custom of toasting which prevailed in the Britain of a former age and which should accompany the quaffing of a friendly cup in any civilised society, but which no longer has the politeness or dignity British tradition demands. Those who have a feeling for the grandeur and culture of Britain and her traditions will rejoice to be able to quaff once again this noble liquor in its beautiful national drinking-vessel, the mazer, and pledge the health of their friends with the toast that is as rich in tradition as their drink—'Wassail.'

# Twice-Told Tales

## XXX.—Mister Pooh-pooh

[From *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* of June 1853]

POOH-POOH is a surly old gentleman, not without his virtues. It is his delight to throw cold water on ardent projectors, and save people from deluding themselves with extravagant views of human improvement. Without hopes or faith in anything himself, he tends to discourage all hopeful effort in others. Had he his way, there would never be any brilliant or highly useful thing done. He would keep all down to a fixed level of routine, passable, but only just enough to escape censure. He wishes to make the course he takes appear as springing from a hatred of the extravagant; but it often comes mainly from a desire to avoid being troubled, or, worse still, from a jealousy of the people who strive to be extra-good or great. He certainly is not quite the infallible sage he wishes to pass for.

The fact is, there is not one of the important inventions and extensions of power of the last wonderful age which has not had to struggle against the chilling philosophy of Mister Pooh-pooh. History is full of the instances in which he has condemned, as impracticable and absurd, proposals which have ultimately, in spite of him, borne the fairest fruit.

Pooh-pooh has his favourite positions in this world. He likes, above all things, to be in office. His defensive negative policy is seen there in its greatest force. Indeed, it scarcely has an existence elsewhere than in places of dignity and trust. From his being practically connected with things, he knows their difficulties, which dreamers out of office have no idea of; and thus it is that he feels himself entitled to speak so confidently against every new thing that is proposed.

The external aspect of Mister Pooh-pooh is hard and repelling. He has a firm, well-set, self-satisfied air, as much as to say: 'Don't speak to me about that, sir.' He has a number

of phrases, which he uses so often that they come to his tongue without any effort of his will, such as: 'It will never do'—'All that has been thought of before, but we know there is nothing in it'—'People are always meddling with things they know nothing about'; and so forth. We might call them pet phrases, if it could be imagined that Mister Pooh-pooh had a favour for anything; but this we well know he has not.

We are afraid that this is beginning to be rather an unpleasant world for Mister Pooh-pooh. It goes too fast for him. So many of his hopelessnesses have been falsified by events that he must feel himself a little out of credit. Then his own constant sense of disappointment! To find novelty after novelty 'getting on,' as it were, in spite of his ominous head-shakings, must be a sad pain to his spirit, cool and congealed as it is. One day, it is iron steamers—another day, rise of wages under free-trade. Great reliefs are given to misery, great positive additions made to national happiness, where he long ago assured the world no such things could be. It is too bad. I begin to feel almost sorry for poor Mister Pooh-pooh under these circumstances. It sets me upon recalling his virtues, which, in his present unfortunate position, we are too apt to overlook—namely, his usefulness in saving us from rushing into all kinds of hasty ill-concocted plans and patronising all kinds of plausible superficial pretenders. Depend upon it, Mister Pooh-pooh has his appointed place in the economy of a wise Providence; and, therefore, pestilent as he is sometimes with his leaden immovable mind, I think we are called upon to administer only a qualified condemnation. The drag is but a clumsy part of the mechanism of a carriage, but it has sometimes the honour of being indispensable to the saving of all the rest from destruction.





## *Fantasia*

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GILBERT HARRIS

**T**'ROUBLE at Ahwar again, sir.' The wireless-operator passed this comment as he handed me a message. It was from the Arab operator at Ahwar. Translated into English, it read: 'Come at once, considerable unrest, unable to find out why.'

Ahwar was a small town in the Aden Protectorate, about 150 miles from Aden itself and roughly 5 miles in from the coast. A real trouble-spot it was in those days. Rarely did a couple of months pass but a call for assistance was received from our native wireless-operator. The town and the surrounding territory was ruled by a minor Sultan who did not seem strong enough, or had no desire, to keep his subjects at peace.

The message was disturbing, and because of its vagueness I asked the wireless-operator to call Ahwar back and see if he could get any further information. Very little further detail was forthcoming, however. It seemed that preparations were being made for an all-night 'Fantasia,' for what reason the native operator was unable to discover, but he repeated his request that I come at once.

Now, a Fantasia is for the Arab any type of entertainment in which the whole community takes part, but an all-night one in Southern Arabia means that something big is

afoot. Under normal conditions all Arabs are indoors by nightfall. Anyone abroad after this hour is considered to be up to no good and can expect to find himself a target for rifle-shots. I did not like the look of things at all.

**T**HERE is no direct way overland to Ahwar, the coast-line being cut into in many places by deep wadis, which cannot be negotiated even by camel. It might be possible by foot, provided none of the wadis were in flood. A Vincent aircraft was our only method of transport. These old machines could land and take off in extremely confined spaces and stood up to rough surfaces very well. About a mile and a half north-east of the town was a moderately-flat piece of sand about three hundred yards long, which we used as a landing-ground.

I looked at my watch. It had turned five o'clock—it would be dark by six-ten. That meant it would be impossible to be up at Ahwar before morning. A landing by night was completely out of the question; it was difficult enough to locate the landing-ground in daylight; after dark there would be no means whatsoever by which we could identify

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it. So I made arrangements for an aircraft to be got ready for us to take off at very first light the next morning. I felt pretty certain that, whatever the trouble was, we should be too late to stop it, but I hoped that at least we should be in time to curtail it. From experience I knew that when these Southern Arabs spent a night out at a Fantasia they were apt to get over-excited, and before long someone would fire a rifle. Then a couple of day's general slaughter was likely to ensue.

The pilot of the aircraft and myself were on the airfield well before dawn, ready to take off as soon as it was possible for us to see where we were going. At 5.50 a.m. we were airborne. An hour and fifty minutes' flying brought us in sight of the town, and my fears were confirmed. As we flew over the place I could see the remaining embers of several large bonfires and occasional quiffs of smoke, obviously from rifle-fire. The population was assembled into several groups, the rifle-fire coming from individuals surreptitiously sniping from the cover of buildings.

The pilot had not been on a trip of this kind before, so I located the landing-patch for him. After a couple of circuits at low altitude to take a good look at what he had got to land on he put the aircraft nicely down on the small space available. None of the natives had come out to greet us. This was another bad sign. On normal routine visits, as soon as our aircraft was sighted, every boy and most of the able-bodied men in the town would troop out to watch the aircraft land and gaze in never-ending wonder at the old Vincent. This morning not one small boy was present. It was obvious that whatever was going on in the town was of some magnitude. The pilot and I had our Webleys belted under our bush-jackets, next to our skin, as we set off on the mile and a half walk to the town over the rough stony desert. It was the pilot's first experience of tribal control and it was with some trepidation that he followed on my heels.

The buildings of the town were fairly well spaced and not huddled together as is more usual in Arab towns of this size. There was a large open-space in the centre, which was a kind of market-place. As this was where the largest crowd was, it was there that I headed for. We could still hear occasional rifle-shots, but as I appeared on the scene they ceased immediately. The smaller groups began to break up and to converge on the square. The population was in an excited state. Their

night out had roused them well out of their usual condition of lethargy. A number of them were dancing and chanting on a much-flattened mound in the middle of the market-place and there was much excited chatter generally. I had been to Ahwar many times previously, but there were none among the immediate throng that I could recognise, so I grabbed hold of one of the less-excited ones and demanded an explanation of the all-night festivities and, more firmly, of why there was shooting. Others swarmed round me, all trying to give me their version of the spree. After no little effort I managed to obtain comparative quiet, while my selected tribesman gave me his account of the night's happenings. With considerable assistance from the rest of the audience, this is the story he told.

NINE months previously one of the married women of the town had been observed committing adultery—a crime far more serious than murder, by Arab standards. The observer had reported the occurrence to the Elders, and nothing more was said by anyone, the adulterers themselves being unaware that they had been discovered in their illicit love-making. The informer was forbidden by the Council of Elders to divulge his secret, on pain of death. The next step, following in Arab tradition, was for the Elders to note whether the woman appeared likely to produce a child on or about the date coincident with her illegal union. Had she not done so, she would have been regarded as innocent and nothing more would have been said or done. But it was obvious that she was going to have a child and was therefore deemed guilty.

As her time got nearer, the Elders watched more closely, waiting for the actual birth. It had occurred the previous morning at about 11 o'clock. The town took its usual midday siesta, after which the Council of Elders sent forth their proclamation. Preparations were to be made for an all-night Fantasia.

The tribesmen had no idea for what reason the celebration was to be held. The Arab likes his night out; he was not particularly interested in the reason; there was no doubt some excuse, so he was quite happy. Many willing hands gathered dry timber and large quantities of scrub and built up bonfires at various places in the town. Sites were carefully chosen, as there must be ample room to

## FANTASIA

dance around them. The market-square naturally boasted the biggest fire. Family drums were brought out, dusted, and tuned, and the musicians of the place polished up their pipes and gave them a few anticipatory trial notes. These pipes are thin reed-instruments, with a very narrow tonic range, but the noteworthy feature about them is that they can produce quarter-notes—a feature unknown in Western musical instruments. It is these quarter-notes that give Eastern tunes their characteristic quality.

When all these preparations had been completed, the Elders gave instructions for a grave to be dug in the main square. This stimulated the growing excitement; the whole town understood what this meant—a live burial! No one but the Council members knew who the victim was to be. At this stage, the unfortunate woman herself was unaware that she had been betrayed. But surely never was there a greater excuse for a Fantasia than a live burial! There were plenty of volunteers for the job of digging the grave, in spite of the Arab abhorrence of anything in the nature of hard work. Everyone was looking forward to a grand night.

AS the sun began to sink, the order was given for the fires to be kindled and, when they were well ablaze, the whole of the town's population gathered around the central fire to hear what unfortunate was to play the leading role in the night's festivities. With great solemnity one of the Elders announced the crime of the woman and the penalty she was about to pay. Then she was named. Thunderous applause greeted the announcement, and the mob moved off to the modest mud-hut that served as her home. Here, clutching her newborn babe to her breast, she was dragged out to the head of the procession that had formed itself in front of her home. She was stripped of her few poor rags and was made to walk completely naked to the grave that had been freshly dug. The fact that she had to appear in public without her veil was, for her, a greater disgrace than being unclothed.

Arrived at the grave, there was no more ceremony. The pitiful creature, still clutching closely the babe that had been born to her but a few hours previously, was thrown by many rough hands into the grave. As she lay there in a now semiconscious state, foul abuse was

hurled at her by all and sundry before the earth was piled in on top of her and her child. When the grave was filled there was a mad scramble for the honour of dancing on it. But all made way for the man who had brought about the woman's downfall; he danced the longest and the wildest, with loud acclamation from the crowd. It is interesting to record that Arab laws stipulate that the woman is the only guilty party in cases of adultery. It is considered that she lures the man into his part of the crime.

So the festivities went on, the dancing getting wilder and wilder as the night grew older, until the tribesmen reached the dangerous stage of near-hysteria. It was now that old feuds were being remembered and grudges against neighbours seemed to attain a greater magnitude. Soon a surreptitious shot would be heard, and a tribesman would fall dead or wounded; more often than not some innocent fellow would fall, mistaken in the gloom for the intended victim.

AS the story was nearing the end of its telling, an Englishman clad only in a pair of shorts pushed his way through the crowd to my side. He was the political officer for the district, one of that handful of Britons who strive so valiantly to keep peace and bring prosperity to this wild and uncivilised part of the Protectorate of Aden. He was many miles away the previous evening when he got news of the unrest by the uncanny bush telegraph. Throughout the night he had ridden on horseback across the tough uncharted desert in an effort to prevent disaster befalling the town and its inhabitants. To his dismay, when some twelve or fourteen miles from Ahwar, a wadi in full flood had barred his way. He abandoned his horse, threw off all his clothes, excepting his shorts, and swam the wadi, finishing the rest of the journey on foot.

He was a man for whom the tribesmen had a great respect and on his appearance the high feeling and excitement began to peter out. Live burial was one of the Arab malpractices that the administration had been fighting hard to stamp out. The townsfolk were feeling more than a little ashamed at having been caught out by the one who had done so much for them, and many began to slink away.

The first thing the man did was to order the victims to be dug up, and a grim sight they made in that early morning tropical sunlight.

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The bodies were then given a proper burial in the town burial-ground. Next, the casualties of the shootings were gathered up. They numbered six dead and more than a score wounded. The corpses were duly buried; the wounded had their injuries tended, by washing and dressing, and stitching where necessary, and returned to their homes. All this took us the best part of the morning.

Having got the last of the wounded comfortably settled, word was sent to the Sultan that we would like an audience. Although he had taken no part in the affair, it was his duty, and well within his power, to have stopped the whole proceedings. He had failed in his duty as a ruler in not doing so. Word came back, however, that he was indisposed and unable to see us. This we considered nothing more than a feeble excuse to evade an unpleasant meeting. Although he was only a minor Sultan, he enjoyed full regal rights and we had no power to demand that he see us; so we demanded the presence of the full Council of Elders, but they, too, had found it convenient to disappear. By diligent search, however, we managed to unearth most of them. Instead of their urgently needed siesta after their exhausting night, they were treated to an hour's homily on their weaknesses, their inefficiencies as rulers, their general lack of character, and their breaking of faith with H.M. Government. This was accompanied by threats of what would happen to them and their property if they allowed such a thing to happen again. They listened to everything with the inscrutable silence of which only the Arab is capable—when he feels so inclined.

Not one word did they utter, and when the lecture came to an end they quietly dispersed to their respective homes, and no doubt caught up on their delayed siestas.

It was decided that the following day we would fly up a garrison of levies to ensure that law and order was maintained, for as soon as we had gone there was no doubt a series of reprisals would have broken out from the relatives of the killed and wounded men.

As we returned to the aircraft there was just about enough daylight left for us to find our way back to base. Gently we flew westward over the town. It lay at peace, its occupants exhausted and unlikely to cause any more trouble for the next couple of days. It takes the Arab a long time to sleep off the drugging effects of such a grand Fantasia. We passed over the burial-ground as we left the town behind us and I realised that the vision of the battered bodies of that once-lusty Arab woman and her child would be one I would not be likely to forget. As the aircraft headed towards the sinking sun I wondered how many men there were who had had first-hand experience of a live burial—and whether I would be, perhaps, the last one.

A gathering of high-ranking Sultans held a court of inquiry into the affair. Their findings were that their brother Sultan had been guilty of inefficient rule. They decreed that, as a penalty, he must deliver to H.M. Government forty young, healthy she-camels. But, in spite of repeated requests for the fulfilment of the fine, I do not think that more than a handful of spavined, disease-ridden, old camels were ever delivered.

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## The Doctors

(After La Fontaine)

*Doctor Lugubrius, doing his daily round,  
By one sick-bed his colleague Jolley found  
Already in attendance, full of faith:  
In his own view, the man was nigh to death.  
While the pair squabbled o'er their diagnoses,  
The patient passed away from natural causes,  
Thus justifying Lugubrius' predictions.  
The outcome merely strengthened their convictions:  
'Look,' said Lugubrius, 'he has breathed his last,  
'Which is precisely what I had forecast.'  
'Yes, but,' said Jolley, 'if I'd had my way  
'The man would have been full of beans to-day.'*

S. MACNEILL CAMPBELL.



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## Science at Your Service

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### ILLUMINATED SWITCH-CORDS

**I**N November last mention was made in these notes of permanently illuminating caps for electric-switch knobs. The same lighting principle—a small amount of radium compound behind a transparent plastic window—has now been used for illuminating switch-cords. In the dark, therefore, a miniature point of light will always indicate the actual position of the switch-cord. The compound will emit light for a number of years. Whereas the attachment for wall switches is a rubber cap for slipping over the switch knob, the switch-cord indicator is actually a new switch with cord provided, and the illuminated point is in fact the switch-button. Nevertheless, the price is reasonable and not much above that of the simpler rubber caps for fixed switches.

### GRADUATED ELECTRIC HEAT

Another device for giving graduated or graded control over electrical appliances has been produced. This one, produced by manufacturers of similar devices for electric-cookers, can be fitted into the circuit of portable room-heating appliances. A dial can be set to give a range of heat from zero to full. Models for surface or flush fitting are available, each type covering either 15 amp three-pin plug or 13 amp rectangular-pin plug conditions. The surface model has a cream enamel or oxidised metal finish; the flush model can be obtained with either an oxidised metal plate or brown plastics moulded plate.

### LIGHTWEIGHT SECATEURS

One of the most eminent manufacturers of secateurs, tree-pruners, and wire-cutters has this year added a new lightweight model to the range of secateurs already available. Although the design is little changed, the new model is made of a rustless and lightweight alloy, which nevertheless claims the mechanical strength of steel. This last quality is of major importance, for lightness in secateurs is only a short-term asset if the handles or anvil parts suffer gradual distortion in use. Secateurs must withstand severe strains and pressures

during a day's work. Another special feature is a quick-release press-button fastener, which is positioned near the anvil; this seems to be a considerable improvement upon the exposed spring-and-catch device commonly placed between the ends of the handles in many secateur designs.

### MIXED LIGHTING

A new system of twin lamps is claimed to give a high standard of illumination for industrial work, and to offer at the same time good colour quality and economy in consumption. The principle employed is the blended use of filament and mercury discharge-lamps in the same unit of paired lamps. Colour quality truly approaching that of daylight is said to be reached, but the shadow effects often severely experienced with other modern forms of intensive illumination are only slightly displayed. The twin or paired lamps form one symmetrical unit, and the separate illuminating powers of the two different light-sources are accurately balanced by the lamp-reflectors so that the light distribution from the unit as a whole is even. In factories where workers' efficiency depends greatly upon first-class visual conditions this new idea in lighting seems well worth investigation.

### A BREADBOARD

The breadboard might seem too established a domestic article to be capable of improvement, but at a recent London exhibition of inventions a breadboard that prevents the crumbling of the loaf when it is being cut was shown. Towards one of the longer sides of the rectangular board there is an upright panel containing a vertical groove. The loaf is placed against this panel and the knife is kept in the groove while cutting. As a minor feature, there is another groove in the base-board which prevents the knife from slipping at the end of the cutting operation. The board is made entirely of hardwood. At the time of the exhibition, in early 1953, it was stated that the breadboard would shortly be obtainable, and the price indicated was reasonable.

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### PAINT FORMULATION

An entirely new idea in paint formulation is now being introduced in this country. Briefly, local dealers in paints or paint users can make up their own shades, for what has long been the formulation task of manufacturers—the accurate addition of pigment materials—can now be carried out as a final operation. The advantage of this new system is that only two basic paints need be carried as stock. Small tubes containing the various concentrated colouring materials are all that is needed as additional stock, and it is claimed by the company introducing this idea that it is possible to produce no less than 999 different shades although only two basic paints, grey and white, are stocked. In order to produce any one of these different shades not more than two tubes of the special colouring agents need be added to the base paint. The pigment materials in the tubes are highly refined products, and their manufacture has only been made possible by the development of complex paint-making machinery. The quantities contained in the tubes are accurately premeasured, with the result that exact amounts are added to the requisite volume of basic white or grey paint. It is said to be so accurate a method of formulation that the same shade can be reproduced time and time again when identical directions are followed. The tubes are offered in 16 different colours, each in 8 different sizes or strengths to produce, when added to the base paints as directed, 999 colours. A recipe-book showing all the possible colours and shades and providing the formulation details is a necessary component of this new paint system. The book is fairly expensive to the retailer, but the public will be able to consult it at their paint-dealer's office.

### WASHING BY SOUND

In May a new industrial process for oil-extraction based upon vibration shocks was described in this feature. Not altogether dissimilar in principle is a new domestic washing-appliance which is claimed to remove dirt by the impact of sound-waves. In effect, the normal rubbing and rotational operations of washing are replaced by vibrosonic action. The appliance consists of an electrically-vibrated diaphragm on the end of a central rod; detachable rubber cross-bars can be held in adjustable positions along the central rod and these enable the washer to be securely

held in a wash-boiler, gas copper, etc. A lead and control-switch with transformer are fixed to the other end of the central rod. The time required for washing garments depends upon their textile nature: woollen goods require about 15 minutes, linen and cotton goods about 30 minutes. The wash proceeds without supervision and is claimed to be damage-proof. The two models now available are for use on A.C. supply only, for 200-229 or 230-250 voltage. Within these two ranges the voltage required is selected by the control-switch. Consumption is approximately 25 watts per hour. This new domestic washing-appliance is of foreign origin, but it is being distributed through a well-known British firm.

### FUEL DATA

Much is said these days about domestic fuel usage, but the existent facts can only be obtained from household surveying. Such an investigation has been conducted by the Coal Utilisation Council. Recently 92 investigators visited over 2000 homes, the homes having been selected by expert statisticians as representing an accurate cross-section of the country. Solid fuel was found to be used by 98 per cent of families for heating their main living room. In this main room, 67 per cent had an open fire, 24 per cent a range or cooker, and 9 per cent some other type of solid-fuel appliance. The higher the income of a family the more likely an open fire is to be found. The Coal Utilisation Council regard this evidence as overwhelming proof that any national fuel policy will have to be based on the assumption that 'the traditional love of the open fire is firmly woven into the pattern of family life.'

In winter 47 per cent of households obtain hot water from solid-fuel heating, 44 per cent from gas, and 9 per cent from electricity. In the summer there is an 11 per cent swing from solid fuel, and this is shared equally by gas and electricity. For cooking, 71 per cent of families rely upon gas, 15 per cent on solid fuel, and 14 per cent on electricity.

As for the modern types of appliance, such as continuous-burning and convector fires, one of these was found in 18 per cent of the households in the survey. Questioning revealed that 67 per cent of householders knew about these appliances, so it would seem that so far just over 1 in 4 have converted theory into practice.

## SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

### A BOOT-WIPER

A boot-wiping device may find much greater favour in farmhouses and country houses than the conventional door-mat, particularly outside those doors through which mud-laden feet make frequent entrance. It is a duckboard base to which stiff brush-filling is attached, and in appearance the wiper is not unlike a large short-bristled brush in inverted position. Dirt removed is not held on the surface as with a door-mat, for it can fall through the wiper, and most of it will be readily removable through the gaps between the five strips of board. The standard-sized model measures 1 by 2 feet, but larger sizes are available. The working-life is lengthened by the fact that the five strips of board are easily interchangeable in position; thus, if one area of the brush surface suffers heavy wear, the board carrying it can be moved to a less used position. The board is painted in either red or green.

### CORONATION GLASSWARE

Among the most attractive Coronation souvenirs we have seen, the heat-resisting glassware offered by one of the leading manufacturers of this special type of glass must certainly be given a high place for dignity, design, and usefulness. A six-persons and four-persons dinner-service, a set of fruit-dishes, casseroles, pie-dishes, plates, and teapot stands are all available. Various emblem arrangements of the crown, the year, and the Queen's name are embodied in these glass pieces. This range of souvenirs received official approval by the Council of Industrial Design. The makers charge no more for the Coronation-decorated piece or set than for the similar item or items in their normal, undecorated range. It is guaranteed that for a reasonable period of time after the Coronation the decorated models will continue to be obtainable, which will enable owners of one or two pieces to match with further purchases or make replacements for unlucky breakages. However, this type of glass is ovenproof and exceptionally robust. These souvenirs are graceful and should be useful for many years.

### ERADICATING FUSARIUM-PATCH FROM LAWNS

One of the most common ailments of lawn turf is fusarium-patch disease. It attacks the well-kept lawn with special severity, no doubt because such lawns have developed a somewhat refined balance of species. It occurs mainly in the autumn months, when the combined conditions of warmth and moisture favour the growth of fungus organisms. Brown and circular patches of the size of a penny may spread to areas of one foot or more in diameter, and, as these patches spread and meet, large areas of first-class turf are destroyed or seriously impaired. In bad cases of infection fusarium is also noticeable in the spring months, but then it is often kept in check by the more vigorous growth of the grasses.

Golf-greens and bowling-greens are frequently attacked by this disease. Tennis-courts and cricket-squares also suffer, though usually with less severity, because here the mixture of grass species is wider in range. Counter-action must be taken when trouble with fusarium-patch occurs. If left, the fungal infection extends year by year and the final damage is costly and irreparable except by re-turfing, and even then the infection is likely to remain in the soil and reinvade the new surface.

Fortunately, science has kept pace with the modern expansion of this lawn disease. Mercurial fungicides have been developed for a variety of fungus-type plant troubles, and in fairly recent years it has been found that these will deal with fusarium-patch. Although relatively expensive, the mercurial fungicide is needed in very small quantities. One such product now available in one-pound packs is made up into a spray and a mere one ounce of the basic product will treat many square yards. The directions must be closely followed, as overdosage can result in damage to the grasses. Treatment is not costly, and the disease is cured, though in well-established cases more than one annual treatment may be found necessary to secure a high degree of eradication.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.



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## Her Majesty's Scottish Garden

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THIS month when everyone's thoughts are centred on our new Queen it is good to know that she will be carrying on the great traditions of her forebears in the royal gardens. For some time she took a great interest in that very unusual garden at Birkhall, where she used to go and stay while her father and mother were at Balmoral. It was there, as I describe in my book *The Royal Gardeners*, that she graciously received my wife and I.

Birkhall has a lot of advantages over Balmoral from a gardener's point of view. It is only about 600 feet above sea-level and is much warmer in consequence. The house, which is pure Queen Anne, stands at the top of the fairly long drive, overlooking the river Muick, but the main vegetable-garden lies 100 feet or so below the house and is shaped to follow the contours of the winding river. The bank slopes down from the terrace to the garden below, which is 30 feet in length. The slope is about 1 in 8, and it grows excellent vegetables and strawberries. It is not easy for the gardener there to sow seeds at such an angle, nor to carry out the subsequent cultivation, but the crops are good and the planning and planting is beautifully done.

It was in this garden that I came on the largest clump of the Globe Thistle (*Echinops ritro*) that I have ever seen. It was some 8 yards across and over 6 yards long. Many of the clumps of the herbaceous plants were of a similar size. The Queen referred to Birkhall as 'a delicious garden.' As you walk into the garden on the way to the top summer-house, you pass a garden of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre or so, which is devoted to the growing of cut-flowers for the house, all the simple annuals which are not expensive to grow and yet are very beautiful indeed. It was obvious that the Queen and her husband realised what a wonderful show annuals can make, and how cheap they are to grow.

To-day the Queen has Balmoral Castle, where, instead of an acre or two as at Birkhall, she now has 10 acres to think about. If she follows the custom of her royal father or mother, she will be staying there in August and going on through September. The most

lovely strawberries, Auchincruive Climax, will be in season, for the cropping is planned so that there will be a good harvest when the Sovereign is in residence.

Close by the front-door, so that it can always be seen, is that lovely white large double-rose which they call here the Bonnie Prince Charlie rose. The original plant was sent as a gift all the way from the garden of Charles Edward's villa near Rome, for the Lady of Nethermuirlands, who was a great Jacobite in her day. Her lineal descendant gave this particular rose-bush to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and I hope that it will bloom well during this Coronation year. It is no wonder that people are so fond of the polyanthus roses, because they go on blooming for so long. At Balmoral the roses are often in flower till mid-October, and the favourite variety is Betty Prior.

What a wonderfully natural garden Balmoral is. I was very taken with the glorious Michaelmas-daisy border; the beautiful narrow strip near the house planted up with those glorious blue gentians; and the 'cottage garden mixed border,' as I call it, where you could find verbenas jostling antirrhinums, or the Clive Greaves scabious next to the featheriness of the nepeta.

Much of the secret of success in this royal garden is that large quantities of compost are made every year. For the fruits, and particularly the raspberries, the head gardener uses hundreds of barrowloads of lawn mowings to create a mulch and so help retain the moisture in the ground. This mulching makes it unnecessary to do any cultivation at all between the rows—and raspberries do hate to have their roots disturbed, don't they? The variety Malling Notable does very well at Balmoral, and I can recommend it to readers.

May Her Majesty live long to enjoy her Scottish garden.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

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